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ISRAEL RESTORED;

OR, THE

SCRIPTURAL CLAIMS OF THE JEWS

UPON THE

CHRISTIAN CHURCH:

LECTURES

DELIVERED DURING LENT, 1841,

AT THE

EPISCOPAL CHAPEL, WEST STREET, LONDON,

BY

Twelve Clergymen of the Church of England.



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MDCCCXLI.

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TO THE RIGHT REVEREND
THE LORD BISHOP OF RIPON,
WITH A THANKFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF THE
PROMINENT PART HE HAS TAKEN IN DIRECTING
THE ATTENTION OF
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TO THE
CLAIMS OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL,

These Lectures

ARE,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S KIND PERMISSION,

DEDICATED

BY HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.

P R E F A C E .

THE following course of Lectures owes its origin mainly to the extraordinary interest which has been excited in the public mind respecting the Jewish nation by the late occurrences in Palestine.

The prominency given to that people by the almost unparalleled cruelties inflicted upon them at Damascus and Rhodes, the revival of ancient prejudices by Roman Catholics, and the prospect of the emancipation of the Holy Land from the tyranny of Mahomedan rule, has attracted the attention of all the nations of Europe to the Jews, and called forth every variety of conjecture as to their future destiny. Thus the press has abounded with conflicting opinions, and a state of feeling, approaching to enthusiasm, has been produced. At this moment, then, it seemed to be the privilege, as well as duty, of those whose office it is to give a sanctifying direction to such topics, to make a public declaration of their views, and a course of Lectures, by clergymen

of the Church of England, was arranged, as the best means of eliciting an unprejudiced statement of the scriptural bearing of the question.

These Lectures may be considered as the independent testimony of twelve clergymen, who without previous concert have united in one harmony of interpretation respecting the past, present, and future aspect of Israel, remarkably illustrating the tendency of this subject to produce the fulfilment of that prophecy in Isaiah lii. 8, "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

The aim of these Sermons is not to enter upon uncertain speculations, but rather by arguments, based upon the grammatical and obvious interpretation of prophecy, to enforce upon the Church the great practical lessons of the subject, which the harmony of Scripture warrants.

It is of much importance that the reader should bear in mind that this is the revival of a long neglected truth; and modern students, grateful for former labours in this field, and sensible that they are arrived only at the elements of the

volume of prophecy, are tremblingly alive to the necessity of caution, watchfulness, and humility. And this suggests a very solemn reflection; for the signs of the times, in all their threatening reality, have come unexpectedly upon professing Christians—who, having neglected the diligent study of the Word of Prophecy, have not kept pace with the progress of events in the world. The subject is so practical and so intimately connected with the hopes of the Gentile Church, that we cannot but desire it may excite an increasing interest;* and to guide this interest in the right channel, becomes an object of great

* We would venture to suggest whether the precedents set in Glasgow, Liverpool, and London, of a course of Jewish Lectures, might not be followed by many other towns in England; especially in those where an interest for Israel has already been manifested. We might mention Bath, Bristol, Birmingham, Brighton, Cambridge, Oxford, Derby, Hereford, Hull, Ipswich, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Plymouth, Sheffield, &c., &c. Lectures in these places, by clergymen who have studied the subject, would bring before the public a mass of scriptural truth, and valuable research, which would be eminently calculated to produce sobriety of judgment concerning those great events which are coming on the earth, and prepare both Jew and Gentile for the advent of Messiah.

importance at the present moment. There is danger on either hand—not only from entire neglect of the Jews, but also from a false and unscriptural liberality, alike pernicious both to Jew and Gentile. The effects of this latter spirit may be traced too plainly in the tone adopted of late with regard to the Jewish disabilities, which displays great ignorance of the peculiar state and prospects of the nation of Israel, in regard of their past guilt in the crucifixion of our Lord, their present national rejection, and their future restoration and glory, and which opens the door to a wide-spread apostasy from the faith.

It is hoped that these Lectures will tend, under the Divine blessing, to check this growing evil, and direct the Church to the Word of God, as the only sure and safe guide for individuals and nations.

W. R. FREMANTLE.

Milfield-lane, April 29, 1841.

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and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else besides him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give their land for an inheritance, as it is this day."

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INCUMBENT OF ST. MARY'S, LEAMINGTON PRIORS, CHAPLAIN TO THE MARQUIS
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DEUTERONOMY xxxii. 9, 10, 11, 12.—"For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him."

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

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ISAIAH LXII. 6, 7.

*“ I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,
which shall never hold their peace day nor night :
ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence,
And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he
make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”*

AMONG the extraordinary signs which characterize the present times, one of the most remarkable is the prominence which the Jewish nation has so recently acquired in the public mind, not only in this country, but throughout the whole of civilized Europe. A revolution of opinion has taken place, resembling a transition from a state of supineness and neglect, to one of active sympathy and deep interest in their behalf. They are sud-

denly become an object of contemplation to the Statesman, the Philosopher, and the Christian. Recent political events have powerfully contributed to produce this change of feeling. The Jews are visibly rising up in remembrance before us. Their past desolations, their present position, the purposes of God respecting them; their Restoration, Conversion, and the mode and manner of these events, are now familiar topics of discussion; and there is altogether a mysterious and sublime awe and indescribable interest, as if some *great crisis* were at hand.

The suddenness and extent of this impression is most remarkable. It seems as if the Lord were about to confirm the divine declaration, "I the Lord will hasten it in his time."

What a contrast does this feeling exhibit to the past neglect and treatment of the Jewish nation. For nearly eighteen hundred years it has been customary to consider them as if they were aliens from both God and man; and meriting, by common consent, to be excluded from all participation in the rights of humanity. No hand was stretched out to mitigate their wants; no voice of mercy addressed them in the soft accents of the Gospel of peace. Penal laws were their inheritance; spoliation, stripes, bonds, and imprisonment, furnish the sad catalogue of their

sufferings, and of our guilt. The late persecutions at Rhodes and Damascus afford a melancholy evidence that this spirit still survives in the East; though the strong manifestation of public feeling throughout Europe, indicates a decided revolution of sentiment in the West.

The object of the present series of Lectures is to strengthen this favourable impression; to diffuse more just and enlarged views on the Jewish subject; to correct some prevailing misconceptions, which strike at the root of all exertion in behalf of Israel; to point out the duty of the Christian Church; and to show that all its future hopes of enlargement are inseparably connected with God's purposes of mercy to the Jewish nation. A similar course of Lectures has already been delivered, with the happiest results, in the town of Liverpool; and it is hoped that the example will be followed in other places. May the Divine blessing largely rest on this undertaking; and the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind be given to each of its advocates; and while the cause of Israel is the noble and inviting theme, may Israel's God have all the praise and glory!

In introducing this subject to your notice, I shall endeavour *to show how Jehovah has specially selected the Jewish nation, as the great*

instrument for the display of all his glorious attributes.

In the manner and character of their origin.

The origin of nations is, for the most part, enveloped in fable, and embellished with poetic fiction; or it is the gradual result of personal enterprise and heroic achievement. The foundation of the Jewish nation was laid in the counsels of eternity, and for nobler ends than the perishable glories of this world. They were to be the subject of a mighty dispensation,—the depositories of the revealed will of God,—the channel through which he was to accomplish the purposes of his mercy, in the person of a Redeemer, and in the establishment of an everlasting kingdom. They were to be the instruments in and by whom he was to be glorified, through all the vicissitudes of their eventful history. This design is repeatedly announced in the sacred volume. “*This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise*” (Isaiah xliii. 21); “*Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified*” (xlix. 3); “*The branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.*” (lx. 21.)

Their origin was in accordance with these declarations, and a fit commencement for such a Divine procedure. The call of Abraham is the first great link in the history of Israel. It forms

one of the most memorable eras ever recited in the annals of mankind, whether we consider the minuteness of its beginning, the extraordinary events that marked its progress, or the mighty results with which it will be ultimately crowned.

We behold this distinguished individual selected by Divine Providence as the medium through whom, and by means of whose posterity, the knowledge of the true God was to be kept alive, when the whole world was immersed in idolatry. We see also the uniform order and manner of the Divine proceeding. *"I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing."* (Gen. xii. 2.) Personal religion is invariably the foundation of all true exertion and future usefulness. We must first experience the power of Divine truth on our own hearts, before we can ever expect to be the honoured instruments of imparting it to others.

What a concentration of graces do we observe in the history of this eminent patriarch! What a living exemplification of the faith which is "the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for;" going "not knowing whither he went;" "sojourning in a land of promise, as in a strange country;" "hoping against hope;" the founder of a nation like the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore, innumerable. What a series of signal

interpositions, splendid miracles, and remarkable events, derive their origin from this single and common source, each unfolded in its appointed time, and in their immediate or remote contingencies influencing every age, connected with the rise and fall of empires, and exhibiting God's providential dealings, as the supreme Moral Governor of the world. Kings spring from his loins; prophets lift up the veil of futurity; and how often have the songs of Zion refreshed the mourner in the house of his pilgrimage!

Blended with this eventful history, and resulting from the same original source, we behold the two covenants—the holy law delivered amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai, the transcript of the pure mind of God, the guide of the believer, the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; and the precious and everlasting Gospel, proclaimed amidst the chaunt and acclamation of angels, the only foundation of pardon and peace, the only sure title to life and immortality. What a theme for adoration and praise, worthy of the intellect of the loftiest archangel, yet intelligible to the meek and lowly spirit!—forming altogether a combination of events, surpassing in grandeur and interest the annals of any other time or nation: displaying all the Divine attributes in their fullest perfection; affecting the hopes and fears

of every generation of men; and reaching through the long vista of time, till they shall receive their final consummation in eternity.

In their subsequent increase and deliverance from Egypt.

These events were a fit sequel to such a commencement. The latter is the frequent subject of reference in the sacred Scriptures, and is recorded as a special act of Almighty power. "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."* It is called the "iron furnace," "hard bondage," "cruel bondage."† Declarations like these are familiar to every awakened mind, and endeared to the believer as recalling that spiritual emancipation which is the frequent theme of his gratitude and praise.

All the circumstances that preceded or accompanied this deliverance of the Israelites are signal manifestations of Divine power. For them the order of nature was inverted, and suspended in its course. The river was turned into blood, the thunder, hail, and fire descended from heaven; thick darkness covered the whole land, and all the first-born of Egypt perished. The miracle wrought in dividing the waters of the Red Sea forms the subject of the sublime song of Moses:—

* Deut. v. 6.

† Deut. iv. 20; Exod. i. 14; vi. 9.

“With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together: the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.”

“The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them.”

“Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.”*

I cannot allude to this event without observing, that, since Egypt has become accessible to the traveller, a tradition is found to exist among the Bedouin Arabs respecting this journey, and the subsequent passage of the Israelites through the sea. The tract of country through which they are said to have pursued their course is presumed to be ascertained, and the names and titles of places in the route have been transmitted through successive generations. The scene of encampment at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness, is pointed out. It is said not to have been a town or city, but a district of that name. The road then descends through a valley in a straight line, terminating with a conical mount of imposing appearance to the left, and called *the Mountain of Doubt*; because the direct road to the Red Sea lying in that direction, and the Israelites being

* Exod. xv. 8, 9, 10.

commanded to go to the right, they were in momentary suspense what course to take, till the cloudy pillar is supposed to have guided them to the right—he led them about. Proceeding onwards, the next object of attention is Pihahiroth, or the mouth of the defile, presenting on its entrance an aspect of sublime but terrific grandeur. Here there is a lengthened valley called *the Valley of the Wanderers*, a term that seems forcibly to identify this portion of the route as having been anciently trodden by the Israelites. An immense open plain, or sandy district, succeeds, said to be Baal-Zephon, with a chain of mountains to the right, known by the appellation of *the Mountains of Wonder*, descriptive probably of their astonishment at such a spectacle of surrounding desolation. As the traveller advances onwards, towards the extremity, the sea at length bursts on the view, with all its sublime associations; till a narrow and confined space, enclosed on every side, is entered into, corresponding precisely with the description in Exodus xiv. 3, “*Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in;*” and calling forth those expressions of terror and alarm recorded in the 10th and two following verses. The sequel is well known, and a promontory of land, on the left, projecting

towards the sea, now bears the name of *the Mountain of Deliverance*, the abiding monument of the Lord's almighty power, and of Israel's escape from the pursuit of their oppressors. It merits to be recorded, that the passage across from shore to shore is computed to be from twelve to eighteen miles; and if the circumstantial evidence now mentioned be entitled to credit, which it justly claims, it furnishes a remarkable attestation to the truth of the recorded miracle.*

* This tradition is a conclusive argument against the sceptical assertion which would fix the passage of the Israelites at Suez, where there is a periodical ebbing of the sea, and where the waters are fordable. Such an interpretation is manifestly opposed to the spirit and meaning of the passage already cited, viz., that "the floods stood upright as a heap," that "the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left," and that "the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea."† These are terms which cannot with propriety be considered to be applicable to the passage over a narrow isthmus. It is equally repugnant to our notions of the grandeur of the miracle, which is never adverted to but as an eminent example of Almighty power. In Isaiah li. 10, the Lord himself, speaking of the might of his arm, exclaims, "Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" A reference to the same event, and in words of similar import, is to be found in Isaiah lxiii. 12, "That led them

† Exod. xiv. 22, xv. 8.

In the journey of the Israelites through the Arabian wilderness.

We read the statements, referring to this event, but it is to be feared that much of the effect is lost from our indefinite notions of the scenery described. The Lybian and Arabian deserts must be seen by the eye, and traversed by the foot, to enable us to realize the extraordinary character of this prolonged act of Divine interposition. Six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, sustained in a wilderness from day to day, for the lengthened space of forty years, where there is a total failure of all external means of subsistence; where there is no river, nor springs of water, to mitigate the burning heat; no trees to intercept the scorching sun, and no place of retreat but the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. This, indeed, deserves to be recorded as one of the most extraordinary instances of Divine power ever submitted to the contemplation of mankind. But what most endears this portion of their history is the consciousness of its being a type of "the Church in the wilderness," and intended to commemorate the various stages of our earthly pilgrimage in all its inward conflicts by the right hand of Moses, *with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name.*"

and external trials—that the cloudy pillar and the flowing stream are expressive of Providential leadings and heavenly supplies—that “the land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; the land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; the land of oil olive, and honey,* is the expressive image of the privileges and blessings of the believer, and the pledge and symbol of the heavenly Canaan.

Without extending these remarks beyond their proper limits, we might observe that the Jewish nation has been the great object for the display of all the Divine attributes, of God’s moral government of the world, of his providential dealings, and the most signal interpositions. They have been distinguished by the highest privileges ever conferred upon any Church or people. “For ask now,” says Moses, “of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?”

* Deut. viii. 7, 8.

“Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?”*

St. Paul sums up the whole in the following comprehensive words: “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises:

“Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”†

But it is now time to reverse the picture, and to show that nations and churches may be distinguished by the most signal mercies, and yet be guilty of the grossest abuse of them. Gifts are not graces; the symbols of the Divine presence are not the presence of God in the soul; and privileges, when habitually despised or neglected, are the sure precursors of judgments. These remarks are painfully verified in the subsequent periods of Jewish history; first, by the captivity of *the Ten Tribes* under Psalmanezzer and Ezarhaddon; secondly, by the Babylonian

* Deut. iv. 32—34.

† Rom. ix. 4, 5.

captivity of the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah; and finally, by the entire overthrow of their civil and ecclesiastical polity under Titus;* and their consequent dispersion among all the nations of the earth.

No problem has ever more fully exercised the speculations of the Christian world, than the inquiry where *the Ten Tribes* are to be found. Portions of them are known to be situated in the Crimea, in Egypt, in Abyssinia, among the Affghans in India, and some probably in the vast population of China. The Rev. Joseph Wolff, with that intrepidity and zeal which marks his character, discovered remnants of them where they were originally carried, in the ancient Halah and Habor, once the cities of the Medes.† Others are said to have been recently found on the shores of the Caspian. There is a veil, however, thrown around the ten tribes that shrouds their history and existence in darkness, and which time alone and Providence can remove. But he who, at the great resurrection, will know how to collect the scattered particles of the human body, and form them into the same identity of substance, will be no less able, at the era of the spiritual resurrection of Israel, to bring together

* "Josephus's History of the Jewish War."

† 2 Kings xvii. 6.

“bone to his bone,” to make “the sinews and the flesh come upon them,” and to cover them with the skin above; and then breathing into them his own Divine Spirit, raise them up “an exceeding great army,” a spectacle that may well demand the admiration of men and angels.

The dispersion of the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah, and their continued preservation, is no less a signal proof of Divine interposition. How wonderfully is the chain of prophecy maintained in all its successive links throughout the whole of the Jewish history! Fifteen hundred years before the occurrence of the event, it was predicted by Moses, “And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other.”* By Hosea, “They shall be wanderers among the nations.”† And by Zechariah, “I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven.”‡ The Jews are to be seen in every nation of the habitable globe. The Lord has placed them there, as if to furnish a constant living monument of the truth of prophecy, and of the awfulness of his judgments. There is no mistaking the fact of their identity. God has set, as it were, a mark upon them, in the peculiarity of their lineaments, which at once

* Deut. xxviii. 64.

† Hosea ix. 17.

‡ Zech. ii. 6.

proclaim who and what they are. Their presence never fails to awaken a train of associations in every beholder. They are the world's remembrancers, God's witnesses, a subject of contemplation to men and angels. They stand alone among the various communities of men—mixed with all, united with none. “The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” *

Their preservation, under circumstances which must have led to the extinction of other races, is one of the most extraordinary events in the annals of time. They have no king, no political head, no form of government, no altar, no sacrifice,—without a home, without a country, and aliens from God; and yet they are still preserved. They have been “scattered, peeled, meted out, and trodden down,”† and still remain unbroken and entire. To quote the forcible, and, I might say, the sublime language of a Jew, “*Persecution cannot dismay us, oppression cannot crush us, time itself cannot destroy us.*” An unseen hand has always been stretched out to guard and protect them. “I never,” said Frederic the Great, “laid my hands on that people without having reason to repent it.” “He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes.”‡ Their preservation, during the

* Numbers xxiii. 9.

† Isaiah xviii. 2.

‡ Psalm cv. 14.

whole period of their dispersion, was distinctly foretold: "*I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.*"* "*Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary, in the countries where they shall come.*" †

"*For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve; yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*" ‡

They have been coeval with all the four universal empires—the Assyrian or Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, and yet have outlived them all. They have survived the lapse of time, the overthrow of empires, the invasions of conquest, the vicissitudes to which all earthly things are subject, the fury of persecution, and, I had almost said, the wrath of Almighty God.

We proceed next to inquire, why the Jews have been so providentially preserved; the certainty of their restoration and conversion; and the duty of the Christian Church, in the meantime, towards this interesting and remarkable people.

* Jer. xlv. 28.

† Ezek. xi. 16.

‡ Amos ix. 9.

They have been preserved, because God has a special design of mercy towards them; and this design involves the event of their restoration and conversion. The elucidation of the former will be expressly undertaken by others; I shall, therefore, merely adduce the following passages to establish the certainty of their restoration, as this fact, by a singular misconception, is, by some, avowedly denied; and all the predictions relating to this event, supposed to have received their full accomplishment in their restoration from the Babylonian captivity.

The first passage to which I shall refer is in Isaiah xi. 11, 12:—

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again *the second time* to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, *and from the islands of the sea*. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah *from the four corners of the earth*.....And the Lord shall utterly destroy *the tongue of the Egyptian sea*: and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in *the seven streams, and make men go over dry-shod*. And

there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria ; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt."

The events here predicted have never yet been accomplished. The Lord has never "set his hand again *the second time* to recover the remnant of his people;" nor have they ever been previously restored "*from the islands of the sea,*" and "*from the four corners of the earth.*" "*The tongue of the Egyptian sea,*" or of the Nile, has not been destroyed, nor the river been smitten in its "*seven streams.*" Nor has there been a recurrence of those miraculous interpositions which marked their departure from Egypt; and which both Isaiah, in this passage, and the Prophet Micah, announce to be the accompaniments of their future restoration. "*According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I show unto him marvellous things.*"* These events still remain to be fulfilled, and consequently establish the doctrine of their final restoration.

As it is not, however, my province to show how the denial of this fact militates against some of the most express declarations of the Scriptures; and that the predictions relating to the restoration of the Jews are too enlarged, and universal in their

* Micah vii. 15.

application, to have been fulfilled in the return from the Babylonian captivity, I shall simply refer to Ezek. xxxvi. 24—26, as expressive of a restoration and conversion never yet blended together. The promised union also of the two sticks of Ephraim and Judah, predicted in Ezekiel xxxvii. 22,* (an event which cannot possibly be fulfilled but by the return of the ten tribes, and by that of the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah,) is of itself sufficient to establish the fact of their second restoration, and proves how utterly the attempt to controvert this sense is founded on error, and on a most limited interpretation of the prophecies referring to this subject.

But while the restoration of the Jews is a matter of controversy, or of open denial, with a portion (but we trust a small one) of the Christian public at home; *the belief of the fact is universal among the Jews themselves, and its accomplishment supposed to be nigh at hand.* This expectation is not peculiar to any particular place or country, but prevails especially in the Levant, in Smyrna, and in Constantinople; in Egypt, in

* “And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.” (Ezek. xxxvii. 22.)

Syria, in Palestine, in Poland, and in Germany. It is accompanied by the impression that the period for Messiah's coming is arrived. The year 1840, from the completion of a certain chronological period of time, was announced by their Rabbies as the era for the fulfilment of this event. I have ascertained these facts by personal intercourse and observation, during a late visit to the East. I never remember a more general concurrence of sentiment. *The tide of emigration has already commenced.* "I am going," said an aged Jew, "to witness the appearing of the Messiah. I hope to see him with these eyes. Should I be disappointed in this hope, I shall at least have the consolation of laying my bones in the land of my forefathers." I heard many similar testimonies. Nine hundred Polish Jews solicited permission from the Emperor of Russia to go to Palestine with this view, declaring that should the Messiah not appear, they should, in that case, conclude that he had already come, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and be prepared to embrace Christianity. Civil restrictions threw impediments in the way of this proposition. There may be, and there unquestionably is, a fallacy in the particular object of expectation, and yet the general impression may indicate a state of mind announcing an approaching crisis. There are already five thousand Jews in Jerusalem; and, inclusive of

this number, from fifteen to seventeen thousand in Palestine. There are about eight thousand in Syria, comprehending the Jews of Damascus, forming a grand total of about twenty-four thousand Jews.*

The number, it is said, would be far greater, if the frequent recurrence of the plague, and the delay and expense of quarantine, did not interpose formidable obstacles to the return of the Jews.

In the meantime, what is the duty of the Christian public towards this singularly interesting and illustrious people?

No subject has been less understood than this controverted question. We have contemplated the Jew through the mysterious veil of the Divine purposes, instead of through the more intelligible and binding declarations of plain scriptural duty. We have suffered the emotions of Christian zeal, of sympathy for their misery, and gratitude for past obligations, to lie dormant; lest, in the exercise of these feelings, we should be found militating against the designs of Jehovah. We have permitted speculation to occupy the time that ought to have been devoted to action. We have even considered every effort of benevolence as visionary and useless, as if the time were not come, and

* This calculation is founded upon an estimate taken by the Rev. J. Nicolayson, Missionary to the Jews at Jerusalem.

when come, that the process of conversion was to be effected by God's sovereignty, and not by man's instrumentality.

Let us then inquire what is the plain path of duty, remembering that "secret things belong to the Lord our God; but the things that he has revealed to us and to our children."

*"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."** *"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."*

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.†

Ministers of the sanctuary! ambassadors of Christ! behold your Lord's commission! Pray for grace to fulfil it with fidelity and zeal; and give the Lord "no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."‡

* Isaiah xl. 1, 2.

† Isaiah lxii. 1. 6, 7.

‡ See also verses 10 and 11 of the same chapter.

But words still more express and authoritative are to be found in the commission given by our Lord to his disciples; a trust and duty delegated to the Church, and binding in its observance, to the very end of time. “Go ye into all the world, and *preach the Gospel to every creature.*” Has any part of this Divine commission as yet been repealed? Is it not universal in its character, and without limitation in its object? Is not the Jew one of the great family of man? Or is he to be blotted out from the numerical list and catalogue of mankind, and to be denied the rights of humanity? Give him, then, at least his allotted share; and if the boon be intended for all, let the Jew enjoy his common right, and not be defrauded of his portion in the universal blessing.

The Jew, however, possesses not only an equal but a priority of right. The injunction of our Lord was “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem.*”* St. Paul declares the Gospel to be “the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, *to the Jew first*, and also to the Greek.”† The apostolical practice was in conformity with these declarations. St. Peter was specially appointed to be the apostle

* Luke xxiv. 47.

† Rom. i. 16.

of the circumcision ; and St. Paul, though invested with the office of apostle to the Gentiles, never failed first to enter into the synagogues of the Jews in every city, wherever he found them, proving that Jesus was the very Christ. What was the measure of their success is attested by the fact that the first Christian Church was formed of Jewish converts ; and that no less than three thousand souls were added to the Church under one single sermon of St. Peter. Nor ought the remark to be omitted, that however the Jews may be cast away *nationally*, they never were rejected *individually* ; there was always, according to St. Paul, “a remnant according to the election of grace.”* To that remnant, then, it is our duty to address the Gospel, leaving to God to whom and when he may see fit to apply it.

Alas ! how have these positive commands and plain declarations been overlooked, and the Jew left to the world’s neglect and contumely, and yet the world’s benefactor ! The medium of light and knowledge to all mankind, yet suffered to remain enveloped in prejudice and guilt ! Left, too, to sink under this reproach and scorn, and live or die as he may—to feel the throbbings of a broken heart, or to learn the stern philosophy that can neither weep nor suffer—to grow callous by

* Rom. xi. 5.

repeated shocks, and find out the way to love nothing, and to hate everything, because the general object of estrangement and neglect. No man, whether Jew or Gentile, was ever yet reclaimed by modes like these. Let us, then, now try the experiment of love and mercy. The heart that is wounded and alienated by neglect, may be won by the accents of sympathy and love. The process of vegetation is retarded by the wintry blast, but it is called forth and nurtured by the vernal sun. Let us approach the Jew in the spirit and with the tidings of the Gospel. Let us pour oil into his wounds; let us direct him to the cross of the Saviour, to David's Lord and God; and addressing him with the zeal and winning affection of the apostle, exclaim, "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*" *

Having thus enforced the duty, I would now beg to remark

The encouragement that we have to engage in this cause, from the signal success that has already attended it.

The experiment has already been made. Upwards of thirty years ago, an Institution arose entitled "The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews." Its

† Rom. x. 1.

object was simple, scriptural, and practicable. It did not profess to promote the national conversion of the Jews. This act, by general consent, is admitted, from the declarations of prophecy, to be reserved for the hand of God alone. It left the debateable ground of prophecy to its own proper domain, to the counsels of Him who doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. It took the simple path of duty, as enforced by the authority of Divine commands. In the course of its labours, it has circulated among the Jews several thousand copies of the holy Scriptures. It has established schools for Hebrew children, and has opened an Episcopal Chapel for Divine service in Bethnal-green, under the license and sanction of the Bishop of London. The Liturgy of the Church of England has been translated into Hebrew. Forty-seven missionaries and missionary agents have been sent forth, of whom twenty-three are converted Jews. The Society has been instrumental in the formation of similar Institutions in Berlin, Breslaw, Konigsberg, Posen, Cracow, Warsaw, and other places; and it has established a Mission on Mount Zion, where a church is now in progress, the first Protestant sanctuary that will have been erected in Jerusalem since the apostolic ages. As to the result of these labours, *two*

hundred and seventy-nine individuals of the Jewish nation have been received into the Church of Christ by baptism, and eight Jewish converts are now ordained clergymen of the Church of England. In the Prussian dominions upwards of fifteen hundred Jews have been baptized. Dr. Tholuck, an eminent Professor in the University of Halle, observes, "More proselytes have been made during the last twenty years, than since the first ages of the Church. In Breslaw there are three Professors, formerly Israelites; in Halle, five; in Berlin, one. Some of these are of the highest scientific reputation, and are now faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ."

This encouragement is still further increased if we contemplate

The signs of the times.

Their character is truly extraordinary, whether we consider them in their *political, moral, or religious aspect.*

A singular instability is perceptible in all earthly things; and "there is a shaking of the heavens and the earth."

There are fearful elements of disorder pervading the whole social system.

There is a great conflict of opposite contending principles. Light and darkness, truth and error, religion and infidelity, social order and democratic

and revolutionary spirit, are each striving for the mastery.

A great crisis seems to be at hand. "*Jerusalem,*" we are told, "*shall be built up in troublous times.*"

The Turkish empire is evidently approaching the period of its dissolution. The sixth vial has for some time been poured out on the mystical Euphrates, that "the waters thereof may be dried up, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared."* The Mahommedan power is the great political and moral impediment that stands in the way of the restoration of the Jews; and the drying up, or gradual exhaustion of that empire, typified by the pouring out of the vial on the river Euphrates, is the process that is now, and has been for some time, in course of operation.

Among the Jews themselves there is observable—

A prevailing spirit of inquiry;

A diminution of prejudice;

A disposition to receive and examine the Scriptures, and a declining reverence for Talmudical doctrine.

A Jew in a distinguished city in the East informed me, that were it not for the dread of a bitter persecution, there were hundreds, he might

* Rev. xvi. 12.

say thousands, of Jews, who were now secretly convinced of the truth of Christianity, and fully prepared to embrace it.

We next notice,

The blessing promised to those who love the cause of Israel, and labour to promote it.

“Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.” * “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee.” †

The truth of this fact has been illustrated in every age, from the times of Joseph to the period in which we now live.

In the case of Potiphar. “And it came to pass from the time that he had made him (Joseph) overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that *the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.*” ‡

In that of Pharaoh; in the preservation of his land in the seven years of famine.

In the example of Cyrus; of whom it was said, “I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.” §

In the instance of the Centurion, whose servant was healed, and of whom it was said, “He loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.” ||

* Numbers xxiv. 9. † Psalm cxxii. 6. ‡ Gen. xxxix. 5.

§ Isaiah xli. 27.

|| Luke vii. 5.

Nor is it less remarkable that as blessings followed the friends of Israel, so did judgments overtake their oppressors. "I was wroth with my people, I have given them into thine hand: *thou didst show them no mercy.*"* Then follows the denunciation in verse 9, "These two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood." There is also a threatened judgment, of a most appalling and comprehensive character, that still awaits its accomplishment. "And it shall come to pass, in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations *that come against Jerusalem.*"†

Reverting, however, to the promised blessing, I would especially appeal to those who have taken an interest in the cause of Israel, and ask whether, in so doing, they have not seen this promise amply verified in their own experience? Whether they cannot trace many providential dealings to this source? Whether the Bible has not become more endeared to them, and more intelligible, in proportion as it has been viewed in connexion with God's purposes of mercy towards his ancient people? The knowledge of the Jewish cause, in its grand outline, and in the two fundamental features of *their restoration and conversion*, is essential to the right understanding

* Isaiah xlvii. 6.

† Zech. xii. 9.

of the sacred Scriptures. It is the key of interpretation; and tends to enlarge our conceptions of the adorable wisdom, sovereign power, and grace of God. It is through this medium that we see the lengths and the breadths, the heights and the depths, and “the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.” Having now been engaged in this cause about thirty years, I trust I may be permitted to say, that I have found it to be a labour of love, of personal profit, and delight—that it was the first means of rescuing me from that paralyzing system of interpretation, which is called “*spiritualizing the promises* ;” that is to say, ascribing all the promises to *spiritual Israel* instead of allowing *their primary application* to the literal seed of Abraham; *and their secondary, and more enlarged accomplishment*, in the person of the Gentile Church. It is laid down by an eminent writer, as a fundamental principle in the right interpretation of the Scriptures, never to overlook the literal sense and meaning of a passage, when the natural import of the words bears that construction. By the non-observance of this rule, the plain meaning of words has been violated and perverted; and an attempt been made to defraud the Jew, the original claimant, the heir by promise, by descent, and by a grant and tenure confirmed to him by the oath of God himself, of his inalien-

able right to the covenanted mercies of Jehovah. It is no small ground for thankfulness to be delivered from error. It is still more so to comprehend and to embrace the truth. Let it be remembered, too, that this is no speculative question, but one of deep vital importance, of conscientious principle, and of great practical results. It involves the inquiry, What is the Church's duty to the Jews, what are God's purposes of mercy to them, and what is the connexion between the accomplishment of these purposes, and the future glory of the Redeemer's kingdom? I have now lived long enough to see these things better understood, though much still remains to be effected. I have beheld this small grain of mustard-seed gradually becoming a great tree, bearing its fruit, at home and abroad, and expanding its branches on every side. Nor is it a small consolation that the Church of England has been the honoured instrument of putting forth this great cause, and of proclaiming to "the cities of Judah, Behold your God." A Church engaged in such an advocacy, can never fall. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early."* Animated by such hopes, and cheered by such recollections, I can thank God, and take courage. It will sweeten the last

* Psalm xlv. 5.

moments of expiring life to have shared in the labours, and to have partaken in the triumphs of such a cause; and to be able to exclaim with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!"

But it is now time to draw these remarks to a close. I consider, therefore, lastly,

The connexion which the restoration and conversion of the Jews bears with the hopes and expectations of the Church of Christ, and with the future glory of the Redeemer's kingdom.

I leave to those who follow me the various details and circumstances, as to the nature and character of this millennial kingdom; and whether by a personal reign of Christ, or not, to each man's own peculiar view and interpretation. I beg here to express my own decided conviction, that if we wish now more particularly to introduce the Jewish cause to the conscience and hearts of the British public, we must do so in a spirit of calm and impartial investigation; with a constant reference and appeal to the authority of the Holy Scriptures; avoiding a dogmatizing spirit; allowing for many shades of opinion in a subject so confessedly difficult and mysterious as prophetic interpretation. But there ought to be an agreement upon *the grand outline*, or there

will be a want of uniformity, where uniformity is not only desirable but essential; viz., that all the hopes of the Church are suspended on the restoration and conversion of God's ancient people. For this she prays; for this she waits in anxious expectation; for this "the watchmen upon her walls" are commanded "never to hold their peace, day nor night;" "to keep not silence," and "to give the Lord no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Until this event takes place the Church will be "in the wilderness;" in a depressed state; in her humiliation and bondage. But when the Lord shall have mercy upon Zion, she will then put on her "beautiful garments," and enlarge the place of her tent, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitations. She will lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes, and break forth on the right hand, and on the left. *The conversion of the Jews will be the lever that will raise the world.*

"If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, *how much more their fulness?*"

"If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, *but life from the dead?*"*

* Rom. xi. 12, 15.

The Grandeur of this event.

The Prophets, in contemplating this great event, employ the most lofty and magnificent imagery. Rapt with the vision of the glory that was to be revealed, they abound in sublime addresses, and in the most impassioned exclamations. "O Zion," says the prophet Isaiah, "that bringeth good tidings, get thee up in the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"* "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted."† And while Zion, remembering the long period of rolling years, since God hath withdrawn his loving mercy, mournfully exclaims, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me;" he replies, with accents of affectionate regard, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold! I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." "For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction

* Isaiah xl. 9.

† Ibid. xlix. 13.

shall even now be too narrow, by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.”*

Such are the consolatory assurances of Jehovah to his people; while widowed Zion, seeing her long estranged Lord returning to her, and her children coming from afar, and gathering around her, lifts up her eyes with mingled astonishment and adoration, and exclaims, “Who hath begotten me these?” “What hath God wrought?”

Manner and circumstances of their conversion.

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.”†

“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east, and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”

* Isaiah xlix. 14—16.

† Zech. xii. 10.

“And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.” “And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.”*

That the Jews, thus converted, will become the great missionaries to the whole world, seems to be clearly inferred from the following passages:—

“And ye shall be unto me *a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*”†

“Ye shall be named *the priests of the Lord.* Men shall call you *the ministers of our God.*”‡

“In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”§

Who so fit to proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel, as the illustrious monuments of its transforming power and grace? From what lips can divine truth flow more persuasively, than where the heart is overpowered with gratitude and love? Scattered, too, as they are among all nations, their conversion will consequently exhibit so universal a spectacle of the power, faithfulness, mercy, and

* Zech. xiv. 4. 8, 9.

† Isaiah lxi. 6.

‡ Exod. xix. 6.

§ Zech. viii. 23.

love of God—it will afford so unequivocal a confirmation of the truth of prophecy, and of the wonderful dealings of Providence towards this remarkable people; that all men, as if with one common voice, shall exclaim, that the Lord he is God, and bow down in praise and adoration before him. An impulse shall be given to the world beyond what it hath ever experienced before; while the Jews, the distinguished monuments of saving truth and mercy, and acquainted, as they are, with the manners, languages, and habits of every country, shall be eminently qualified as missionaries for the propagation of the Gospel throughout the world.

The holiness and blessedness of the Church, resulting from the conversion of the Jews.

“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.”

“The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.”

“Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”

“Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.”*

* Isaiah lx. 18—21.

LECTURE II.

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION.

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HABAKKUK II. 2.

“And the Lord answered and said unto me, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”

It is a solemn and instructive emblem, by which the Apostle St. Peter describes the word of prophecy, as “a light that shineth in a dark place.” The present world, we are thus taught, and experience confirms the truth, is like a troubled and trackless ocean. It is a place which sin has filled with confusion, and buried in gloom. Its history is one perpetual round of strife, and war, and tumultuous violence. Empires may rise and perish; generations may come and pass away; but

the confusion is still the same; the children of the world walk on still in darkness; the mystery and the gloom are as deep as ever; and while the Christian gazes thoughtfully on the scene, the inquiry of the prophet rises to his lips, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

But the word of prophecy is a bright and cheering lamp, amid the world's darkness. There, in those sacred pages, we behold a scheme of redemption, which is from everlasting to everlasting, but which is daily unfolding itself in the history of our fallen world. There we learn, that however the counsels of man may fail, though empires may perish, and generations may pass away, there is a counsel that shall stand for ever, and a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,—the counsel of God, and the kingdom of the Most High. The mist and darkness are rolled away from the landscape of Divine Providence, and we can trace, from age to age, the unveiling of God's infinite goodness, in the recovery of our guilty race to the presence of his holiness, and the enjoyment of his love. The dispensations of his grace present themselves in succession to our view, and still, as they advance, increase in their clearness and beauty, till at length the triumph of a Saviour's mercy is complete, and "the kingdoms of this world, become the kingdoms of our Lord."

Thus the word of prophecy, when received in simple faith, fulfils its appointed office as a beacon-light, and leads our thoughts onward, through all the changes of time, to that "rest which remaineth for the people of God."

Light, then, and not darkness, is the true character of all the inspired prophecies. But the description applies most fully to those which predict the past desolation and future glory of Israel. The visions of Daniel and St. John retain an air of mystery that accords well with their reference to the Gentile dispensation, that time which is called by emphasis, *the mystery of God*. But the prophecies which relate to the Jews are free from this symbolical veil. They are clothed in simple language; they stoop to our earthly estate; they are imbedded in the facts of history, and confirmed by visible earnestness of their truth. To the spiritual and sanctifying power which they share with all the Divine promises, they add the intense reality of persons, and scenes, and places, which are within our reach, or even before our eyes. The stronghold of man's unbelief lies in the things which are seen and temporal. But these prophecies assail it even here. They reveal to us a counsel of God plainly fulfilling itself on the face of the earth. They show us a country marked off—a people separated, as the visible

witnesses, first of his just severity against sin, and then of his overflowing mercy and unchangeable goodness. The spell of Infidelity is thus broken, which would keep our earth separate from heaven; and the golden links are seen already in being, which will shortly bind them together into perfect union. With a variety and fulness of truth, which opens a boundless field for hope, meditation, and prayer, there is in these predictions a simplicity which the meanest Christian may understand. The promise of God tempers itself to our feeble vision, and by the view of the blessedness of the earthly Jerusalem, would prepare our souls for the higher and fuller glory of the Jerusalem above.

When we turn from this view of prophecy, a view taught us by the Spirit of God himself, to the actual state of the Church, how painful is the contrast! The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness receives it not. The lamp which God has vouchsafed to us for our guidance is neglected, or even scorned, by the great body of those who bear the name of Christians. The calculations of their own worldly prudence eclipse the messages of the Infinite Wisdom. They boldly reverse the commandment of the Holy Ghost. While he charges us to take heed to the word of prophecy, they brand attention to it as enthusiastic folly, or the dreams of madness. Nay, many, even

of the true followers of Christ, are entangled, though to a less degree, in the same grievous snare, and practically discourage that which the Spirit of God so earnestly commends. So that a part of the inspired oracles, nearly as large as the whole of the New Testament, comes to be entirely neglected; or furnishes, at most, only a few vague hopes and general lessons of warning; while its main purpose is overlooked, and the rich variety of Divine truth which it contains is uncared for and unexplored.

To what cause must we ascribe this neglect of Old Testament prophecy, which has been till of late, and we fear, still continues so marked a feature of the Gentile Church? In the great body of nominal Christians it arises, doubtless, from man's natural aversion to the Word of God, and his dislike to realize the presence of his Maker. Its source, in more spiritual Christians, is the selfishness which clings even to the regenerate soul, and which struggles mightily against the power of Divine grace. In the unbeliever, this selfishness reigns and triumphs; but where the work of faith is begun, the enemy puts on a spiritual garb, and tutors the soul to be selfish even in the things of God. Personal safety is then placed higher than the glory of the Saviour. The question becomes, how low a stage of grace will secure from danger, not how largely may Christ be honoured and served;—

how little truth is sufficient and essential, not how much may we hope to receive, and how much is the God of all grace willing to bestow. And since the effect of the Jewish prophecies on personal edification is less self-evident than in some other parts of Scripture, we doubt the wisdom of God, who pronounces every part to be profitable for our instruction in righteousness; and we thus remain under the blight of a spiritual selfishness, that withers and deadens all the strength of the soul.

But there is a further cause of this general neglect, in the wide-spread feeling of uncertainty and doubt as to the true sense of the Scripture prophecies. Many things have concurred in this effect;—the mysteriousness which must be admitted, in some few of the prophecies themselves,—the variations of numerous expositors,—the gross perversions of some,—the vague, uncertain allegories of others,—and the currency of the false maxim, that all predictions, when fulfilled, are clear, and when unfulfilled, obscure and inexplicable. These causes, and such as these, have changed the faith of the Church into bewildering uncertainty. The vision, according to God's own warning, has become as the words of a book that is sealed. Divines have maintained, in the face of the clearest examples, and the plainest warnings, that the inspired predictions were not meant to be

understood till after their fulfilment. So that the metaphor of the apostle has been reversed. Christians have learnt to describe the word of prophecy, not as the beacon-light, but as the trackless and dangerous ocean. They have ventured to be wise above what is written, and have warned their brethren against that very study, on which the Holy Spirit has pronounced a solemn and repeated blessing.

What, then, in this state of the Church, is the duty of Christ's ministers, the appointed stewards of the mysteries of God? The text supplies us with an answer. The prophet had just given the Jews warning of the Chaldean invasion. The Spirit of God taught him to fear, that however plainly the message was given, they "would in no wise believe it." He prepares himself for sceptical doubts and contentious opposition. He seeks for wisdom from above. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me on my tower, and watch what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am argued with." And he receives a gracious answer. He is to write the message in clearer characters, and expose it on tablets to the public view, that even the most careless might have no excuse for ignorance. "The Lord answered and said unto me, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."

The spirit of this command applies clearly to

the ministers of Christ in the present day. The importance of a knowledge of God's prophecies to the Church has not ceased, and cannot cease, till her Lord's return. The prophecy teaches this in the next verse, as explained by the apostle. "The vision," we are told, "is for an appointed time," even "until he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." (Hab. ii. 3; Heb. x. 37). Till then the same duty rests on his messengers. If the word of prophecy have been covered with the mist of false glosses, or cankered by the rust of neglect, they must clear away the doubts that obscure it, they must restore the engraving in fuller and broader relief; and so present it to a careless world, with the stamp of God's veracity, and the bright and clear impress of heavenly and everlasting truth.

To fulfil this command, in humble dependence on the blessing of God, is our present aim. May the Holy Spirit himself open our eyes to understand his word. Our object is to make the vision plain, as on tablets, to the most casual observer; and with this view, first to EXPLAIN THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY, and then TO CONFIRM IT BY SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENTS. The subject may seem, at first, dry and abstract. But our attention will be amply repaid, if we are led to a simpler faith in the oracles of God, and to a closer and deeper search into their treasures of heavenly wisdom.

WHAT IS THE MEANING, then, OF THE LITERAL SENSE OF PROPHECY? False notions on this point have been very general, and absurd consequences have been grafted upon these, to justify a system of glosses and allegories, and transfer all the Jewish promises to the Gentile Church. The definition may be given in two forms, which agree in their result, and help to explain each other. First, "the literal sense is that in which we adhere to the common usage of terms, and the natural scope of the passage, as inferred from the context alone." Secondly, it is "when we attach to a prophecy that same sense which we should naturally assign to it, if it were a history of past events, and not a prediction of the future."

Let us explain by a few examples. The prophet Isaiah, in chap. iv., has the following words, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord shall create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies, a cloud and a smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire

by night, for upon all the glory shall be a defence.”

Here the context will determine the literal meaning. The Jerusalem spoken of is the same of which it was said just before, “Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.”* The daughters of Zion are the same class who have just been so sternly reproved for their haughtiness and pride—the daughters of Israel dwelling at Jerusalem. The assemblies of Mount Zion are the same of which it had been declared, “The calling of assemblies I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting:”† they are the assemblies of Israel for worship in the holy city. The literal sense is, therefore, that Jerusalem, then fallen so low, should rise from her ruin; that her daughters shall be as glorious for purity and meekness, as once they were detestable for their pride; that the judgments of God, and the power of his Spirit, shall effect this mighty change; that all the dwellers in Jerusalem shall then be holy, without any mixture of the profane; and that a glory, like the pillar of cloud and of fire in the desert, shall then rest, as a sacred token of God’s holy presence, upon all the assemblies for solemn worship in Jerusalem.

* Isaiah iii. 8.

† Isaiah i. 13.

Again, let us compare Isaiah i. 7—10 with the opening of chap. lxii., and, on applying the second definition, the sense of the prophecy will be clear. One passage is historical, the other prophetic; one speaks of Zion's glory, the other of her shame; but in other respects they entirely correspond. If we expound the prophecy as the history must be expounded, no doubt can arise upon its meaning. The country which is to receive the name of Beulah, in token of God's peculiar favour, is the same which before had been "desolate and burned with fire,"*—the land of Israel. The daughter of Zion, to whom the high surname is to be given, Hephzibah, "my delight is in her"—the Zion for whose brightness and salvation Messiah pleads with unceasing fervour—is the same that was left "as a cottage in a vineyard, and as a besieged city," while the Assyrian invaders were overspreading the land. The figures used in the second place to express the glory of Zion, are scarcely stronger than those in the first to express her degradation. Is it said, in imagery of striking beauty, "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God"? A metaphor not less vivid has been used to describe her corruption: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of

* Isaiah i. 7.

our God, ye people of Gomorrah." The same laws of thought by which we explain the history, enable us, without further strain upon language, or recourse to allegories, to expound the prophecy also.

But there are three main difficulties which have perplexed this subject, and which we must endeavour to remove. These are, the presence of FIGURATIVE TERMS, the SYMBOLICAL nature of some of the PROPHECIES, and the ANALOGICAL OR TYPICAL APPLICATIONS of others. The definition of the literal sense which has been already given, will furnish us, in every case, with an easy solution.

First, it has often been thought, that to advocate the literal sense of prophecy involves the absurd consequence of denying all metaphorical and figurative language. And the strange paradoxes which must be maintained on this view, are sometimes urged with an air of triumph, to prove the need for adopting allegorical glosses, and rejecting the literal sense. Specimens of such paradoxes might be multiplied with ease, if it were consistent with due reverence for God's most holy Word. But to all such objections, whether brought forward with flippancy or with seriousness, there is a simple reply. The literal interpretation, rightly understood, does not exclude the admission of figures ' wherever the context of itself shows their

presence, or wherever we should allow them to exist, if the prophecy were a history of past events.'

How beautiful, for instance, is the patriarch's blessing upon his favoured son. "Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." Let us compare this with the close of the blessing of Moses on the tribe of Joseph. "His glory is as the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are as the horns of unicorns; with them shall he push the people to the ends of the earth; and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh." In the first, or historical passage, we find it easy to expound the figures, and still to retain their literal application to the sufferings of Joseph and the treachery of his brethren. Why, then, should the metaphors in the words of Moses obscure from us its literal application to the tribe of Joseph? Or why, because of the presence of figures, should we have recourse to systematic allegory in prophecies of the future more than in histories of the past? The metaphors, in each case, are only a veil or flowing drapery, beneath

guage of the vision itself, and the common language of the explanatory supplement. The bare fact that both are employed, implies that either would be imperfect, if taken alone. The sense, therefore, of each, when doubtful, ought to be fixed by the light which the other supplies. Just as we are to assign that significance to the emblems, which agrees best with the Divine explanation; so, where that explanation itself contains peculiar or ambiguous terms, that meaning ought to be given them which harmonizes best with the Divine emblems. The law of literal interpretation still holds true; the circumstances of its application alone have varied. The symbolic prophecies, far from impeaching its truth, present it in a fresh light, and yield it fuller confirmation.

A third ground of objection or difficulty, has been the FIGURATIVE APPLICATIONS OF PROPHECY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. Some instances of these clearly exist, though much fewer than is often supposed. Whether we admit or reject the literal sense of Malachi's prediction concerning Elijah (Mal. iv. 5), or that in Hosea of the restoration of the ten tribes (Hos. i. 10, ii. 23), it is plain that our Lord applies the first of these to the Baptist (Matt. xi. 18), and that St. Paul quotes the second in connexion with the call of the Gentiles. (Rom. ix. 24—26.) Have we not, then, a sufficient

ground for rejecting the literal sense, not only in these passages, but in all those which seem to predict a future glory of Israel?

The fallacy of such a conclusion will be seen by comparing these applications of prophecy with the types in the narrative portions of Scripture. We know, on the authority of St. Paul (Gal. iv. 24), that the history of Hagar and Sarah, of Ishmael and Isaac, is to be viewed as a Divine allegory of the two covenants. But what sound interpreter would dream of denying, on this account, the historical truth of that sacred narrative? In the prophet Hosea, again (xi. 1), the Lord reminds his people of his mercy to them in their first exodus: "When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." The Evangelist, however (Matt. ii. 15), teaches us to read in this a prophecy of our Saviour's flight into Egypt and of his return to Judea. Yet no one has ever fancied this to be any presumption against the historical certainty of that first exodus of Israel. The rest of Canaan, as the apostle teaches the Hebrew Christians (Heb. iv.), was a shadow and earnest of the true rest which remaineth for God's people. But the entrance of the Jews under Joshua into Canaan is not the less a plain fact of sacred history. What reason have we to adopt a different rule in the case of inspired prophecies?

These are only history written before the event, and the analogical lessons that are entwined with them form no presumption against their literal truth. The events recorded in the books of Genesis and Joshua are undoubted facts, though we have inspired warrant for their typical meaning. Why, then, should we doubt the reality of the future glories of Israel, because they form such expressive emblems of spiritual and heavenly things?

The literal interpretation, therefore, when rightly understood, admits of the intermixture of figurative language, is the true groundwork of symbolic exposition, and consistent with allegorical applications, wherever they can be proved from Scripture itself, and are not perverted, so as to set aside the direct meaning of the prophecy. Let us now proceed, in the second place, TO ESTABLISH ITS TRUTH BY SOME SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENTS.

The first of these we may draw from the words of our text itself. The command of God is there given to the prophet, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." May we not adopt here the reasoning of our blessed Lord, "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"* As the goodness of God enables us from the greater gift to infer the less, so his wisdom warrants us to infer, where

* Matt. vi. 25.

the less is promised, that the greater, without which it would be useless, has already been given. Is it not, then, more important to the Church, that the language of prophecy should be simple, than that its written characters should be large and plain? Would it not be like a mockery, first to clothe it in allegories, the meaning of which no reader, at that time, could possibly divine, and then to charge the prophet about the public manner of its exhibition, or the distinctness of the engraving? Surely these words are of themselves a convincing proof, that the language of God's prophecies, where not expressly sealed, is intelligible and plain; that the only veil is the blindness of our own eyes, and the only seal upon the vision our negligence or unbelief.

Another argument we may gather from the form of the Jewish prophecies, and the manner of their communication. They are publicly addressed to the Jews themselves. They relate to objects and scenes with which they were familiar. They are given as pledges of the Divine goodness, in contrast with their own sin and degradation. They are attended with the charge, even to the carnal Israelites, in various forms—Believe the prophets of God, and ye shall prosper. They are intermingled with the actual history of that very people, whose future dignity and glory they seem

to announce so clearly. They are worded as if to exclude the possibility of turning them from their natural meaning. "Jerusalem shall be inhabited in her own place, even in Jerusalem."* The Jews are to be "gathered into their own land, and none of them left any more at all"† among the heathen. If God's covenant with day and night should fail, then only shall Israel cease to be a nation before him.‡ Distinct promises are made to the holy city, to the chosen people, and to the very mountains of Israel. The land that has been "taken up in the lips of talkers" (how striking a description even now!) "shall bear the reproach of the people no more," and "bereave its dwellers no more," but "shoot forth its branches for the people of Israel, who are at hand to come."§ Who can read such passages, and not feel that the Spirit of God has hedged round his predictions with a sacred fence, against every attempt to distort them from their simple and literal meaning?

The conduct of the apostles, and the reproofs addressed to them by our Lord, are a further evidence of the same truth. Many times are they reproofed for not receiving a prophecy in its literal sense, never once for so receiving it. They plainly understood the promises made to Israel in this literal

* Zech. xii. 6.

† Ezek. xxxix. 28.

‡ Jer. xxxiii. 25, 26.

§ See Ezek. xxxvi.

manner, but for this our Lord never blames them. His censures are all aimed against their unbelief of other statements, equally plain, of Messiah's sufferings. Such was the rebuke on the way to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."* However chargeable with dulness in other respects, here they are not charged with being dull to understand, but slow to *believe*. It was with them, as with Christians now. Some sayings of the prophets pleased their taste, or tallied with their system, but others were of an opposite kind. They chose out, therefore, which they would believe, and tropes and figures served them doubtless to explain the rest.

A fourth and most convincing argument for the literal interpretation, may be found in the past history of the Jews. The threatenings pronounced against them have been strictly fulfilled; then so must the promises be also. Out of many examples let us choose one only from the prophecy of Micah. There, reproving the sins of the Jewish rulers, the Lord thus pleads with them by the prophet: "Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the

* Luke xxiv. 25.

mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." *

The warning in the first part of this passage has been literally accomplished; some who are here present have witnessed it with their own eyes. Why should we doubt the literal fulfilment of the rest? Will the Most High God perform his threatenings to the letter, and not fulfil his promises also? Shall the burden of a special curse, because clearly denounced, rest in its full weight upon the unbelieving Jews, and shall not repentant Israel enjoy in all its specialty and fulness the promised blessing? Every suffering, indeed, of the Jews in their long dispersion is a token of God's righteous anger for their rejection of his own Son. But, blessed be his holy name, it is more;—it is a lively pledge that the predictions of coming mercy in their restoration, and conversion, and royal dignity, shall also be visibly accomplished in the sight of men. Indeed, that style of interpretation which leaves all the curses in their full weight upon the Jewish nation, and transfers all the blessings by a figure to the

* Micah iii. 11, 12; iv. 1.

Gentile Church, is no spiritual service to God, but an unrighteous perversion of the truth. The Lord himself seems to mark it with the brand of his severe displeasure, when he declares, in connexion with this very subject, "I hate robbery for burnt offering."*

The last evidence we shall now adduce, and perhaps the most impressive of all, is the literal fulfilment of so many prophecies in the person of our blessed Lord. None could be more strange and wonderful than these; none to a merely natural judgment more unlikely to come to pass. The words of St. Peter, before the events took place, had a fair show of reason: "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee."† Yet how fully were they all accomplished! The sign which the Lord gave unto Ahaz was truly "in the height above, and in the depth beneath"—but it was strictly accomplished: "The virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel."‡ The voice of the Baptist was heard in the wilderness of Judah to "prepare the way of the Lord, and to make his paths straight."§ "The Lord, the messenger of the covenant, came suddenly to his temple."¶

* Is. lxi. 8. † Matt. xvi. 22. ‡ Is. vii. 10, 11, 14.

§ Luke iii. 4.

¶ Mal. iii. 1.

The glad tidings were preached to the poor. The eternal Son of God, who “clothes the heavens with blackness, and makes sackcloth their covering,” “gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; he hid not his face from shame and spitting.”* The King came unto Zion, “meek and lowly, sitting on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.”† “His own familiar friend, who did eat of his bread,”‡ laid wait for him, and betrayed him to his enemies. The shepherd was smitten, and the sheep were scattered abroad.§ They pierced his hands and his feet; they gave him gall to eat; and in his thirst they gave him vinegar to drink; they parted his garments among them, and cast lots upon his vesture.|| He was brought to the grave with the wicked, and was with the rich man in his death, and was numbered with the transgressors.¶ But the Holy One of God saw no corruption. He rose from the dead, and the path of life was open before him into the presence of his heavenly Father. He ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men.** And when

* Is. l. 3, 5, 6.

† Zech. ix. 9.

‡ Ps. xli. 9.

§ Zech. xiii. 7.

|| Ps. lxix. 21, xxii. 16, 18.

¶ Is. liii. 9. 12.

** Ps. xvi. 10, 11, lxviii. 18.

the work of atonement was complete, and the heavenly Intercessor provided, and the Spirit poured from on high, the promise of his Father was at length fulfilled: "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." *

But this proof, drawn from the literal accomplishment of so many prophecies in the person of our Saviour, becomes still more impressive from the manner in which our Lord himself, time after time, alludes to that fulfilment. He seeks earnestly to show us that his obedience was to magnify, not only the law, but also the prophecies of God. It is in the most solemn scenes of his history that these passages occur. At the transfiguration "he answered and told them, how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be set at nought."† At his last approach to Jerusalem he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written in the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished."‡ At the last supper he repeats the allusion with a solemn addition—"The Son of man goeth indeed, as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed."§

* Isaiah lxix. 6.

† Mark ix. 12.

‡ Mark xii. 32.

§ Mark xiv. 21.

On the verge of his bitter agony the statement is repeated with a fuller emphasis than ever: "For I say unto you, that this which is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors; for even the things which concern me have their fulfilment."*

This, too, is the cause why, in the hour of treachery and darkness, he refuses to summon the willing legions to his aid—"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"† Nay, even on the cross itself, the Holy Spirit reveals to us the thoughts of the Saviour in his latest agony, and they are still occupied with the same truth: "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst."‡

What a solemn lesson do these various passages convey! Sooner than the literal sense of the prophecies should fail, the Eternal Son of God stoops cheerfully to shame, to bitter agony, to the death of the cross! His awful sufferings are endured, not more to accomplish our redemption, than to fulfil in the letter the predictions of God's word, and to maintain unsullied and spotless the

* Luke xxii. 37, comp. Greek text.

† Matt. xxvi. 54.

‡ John xix. 28.

veracity of his heavenly Father. Well might St. Paul declare, that “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision *for the truth of God*, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”* And can we, or even dare we, any longer doubt the literal accomplishment, in due season, of all God’s prophecies, when it is thus solemnly assured to us by the blood of that Divine and glorious sacrifice, which seals to us the covenant of our own salvation?

These arguments for the literal interpretation of prophecy might easily be multiplied and enlarged. But it may be more useful to expose shortly those objections arising from false methods of exposition, which have hindered the reception of its true and simple meaning.

There are two main schools, then, of interpretation flatly opposed to each other, and which both diverge from the truth—the neological, and the mystical or allegorical. The first is based on the type of the Cerinthian heresy; the second, on that of the Gnostic delusion. The first robs the Divine prophecies of their heavenly, the other of their earthly element. The one debases them from their high dignity, to crush them within the passing events of a day; the other unmoors them from all the anchor-hold of time

* Rom. xv. 8.

and place, and changes their intense and visible reality into a vague and mysterious dream. On the first of these it is not needful to dwell, but as the second still prevails in the Church, it may be well to notice some of the objections to which it has given rise.

It is alleged then, first, on the presumed warrant of some passages in the New Testament, that the title of Jew and the name of Israel belong properly only to true believers in Christ. Thus St. Paul tells us, that “he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly;”* that “all are not Israel, which are of Israel;”† and applies the title of “the Israel of God” to those which walk according to the rule of Christ.‡

A close attention to the scope and context of these passages will dissolve the whole objection. The apostle proves to the unbelieving Jews that their descent from Abraham cannot alone avail them for salvation without faith in Jesus Christ. He admits a hidden and higher sense in the name of Jew—one who receives praise from God (Rom. ii. 29), and offers praise to God (Gen. xxix. 35). He argues, that their natural descent cannot profit them without this inward character

* Rom. ii. 28.

† Rom. ix. 6.

‡ Gal. vi. 16.

graven on the heart by God's Holy Spirit. But he nowhere teaches that the name of Jew, either in history or in prophecy, is to be commonly taken in this peculiar sense. Nay, in every case the Holy Spirit seems, in the context, to guard us expressly against this mistake. Thus, in the first passage it is added in the very next verse: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?"* and in the second, after a few verses: "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness."† And again, when in writing to the Galatians, he gives the name of Israel to Christian believers; it is only after first describing their new creation in Christ Jesus, (Gal. iii. 15), and with the emphatic addition, "the Israel of God," to denote those who are in the actual enjoyment of the Divine favour. But where there is no special mark of deviation from the usual sense, the constant usage of the terms, Jew, Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem, in the New Testament writers, instead of disproving their literal meaning in the prophets of the Old Testament, fully ratifies and confirms it.

Again it is alleged, secondly, that since the coming of Christ, all distinction of Jew and

* Rom. iii. 1,

† Rom. ix. 31,

Gentile in spiritual things is at an end, and hence, that no prophecies of special glory to the Jew can hereafter be literally fulfilled. So again, St. Paul declares, that “there is no difference of Jew nor Greek;”* that “the middle wall of partition is broken down;”† that in Christ “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, but all are one in Christ Jesus;‡ that those who are Christ’s are “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” §

These texts, when viewed in their real connexion, are not more conclusive than the former. It is only when read superficially that they seem to clash with the Jewish prophecies. “There is no difference,” it is true, “between the Jew and the Greek” in the full and free provision of grace in Jesus Christ, and in the way of attaining salvation by faith in him—“for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”|| But in the actual measure of faith, in the sovereign dispensation of the gifts of God, in the privilege of visible adoption into the covenant, and the honour which flows from that privilege, there may be, and has been, and is even now, the greatest variety. The Jews, therefore, who, since their rejection, have been the lowest in Gospel privileges, and under

* Rom. x. 12.

† Eph. ii. 14.

‡ Col. ii. 11.

§ Gal. iii. 29.

|| Rom. x. 12.

the sentence of judicial blindness, may yet become, in God's sovereign goodness, the highest and the first. The middle wall of partition is broken down which shut out the Gentiles from the temple of God; but within the temple itself, there are outer and inner courts, and various degrees of privilege and of glory. There is nothing therefore in these passages really inconsistent with the fullest pre-eminence of Israel in times to come.

The last and most important objection, is the supposed earthly, gross, and carnal character of the literal interpretation. This idea repels many Christians from the subject, and makes them view it as a snare and hinderance, rather than a help to the soul. Hence also the title, spiritual, is often given to the figurative mode of exposition. Let us examine then, by a few plain tests, to which that high title justly belongs; and may the Holy Spirit of God enlighten our understanding, and lead us all to a right and true decision!

First, The truly spiritual interpretation is that which calls Faith into the liveliest exercise. For Faith is the nurse and mother of every Christian grace, the inlet of all spiritual life to the soul. To which of these two modes of exposition does this character apply? To that pliant and easy method which receives in the letter whatever accords with

our Gentile taste, or chimes in with our favourite system, or falls with a curse on the devoted head of the Jew; and then turns the rest into an allegory, to be moulded at our will? Surely it applies much rather to the literal exposition. For this calls us to the docility of a little child. It bids us cast away our high imaginations, and bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, by receiving his messages in their simplest and plainest sense. It commands us, in short, to break down the pride of our human systems, and to sacrifice our dearest prejudice, rather than to do violence to one jot or tittle of the Word of God.

Secondly, An interpretation is spiritual, in proportion as it illustrates the harmony and glory of the Divine attributes. In which exposition is this feature most conspicuous? In the literal, which rests simply on God's veracity, and shows his truth alike displayed in the desolation and the recovery of Israel;—and not his truth only, but the depths of his long-suffering, and the perseverance of his love, and the triumph of his grace, and the riches of his boundless wisdom? Or in the figurative, which is based chiefly on the ingenuity of man; which represents the God of truth as fulfilling his threatenings in the letter, but provides an excuse why his promises

need not be so fulfilled; and thus destroys the balanced harmony of righteousness and grace, in the providence of the Most High toward the lost sons of Israel? On the literal view of prophecy, though grievous darkness has rested on their outcast race for two thousand years, the bow of the covenant, bright with hope, is seen still shining over them; on the other view, the arch is broken, and disappears, and nothing remains of its loveliness but the dark cloud of vengeance.

Again, that interpretation is most spiritual, which magnifies most the truth and preciousness of God's holy Word. For this is the grand instrument of our salvation, and God has magnified his Word above all his name. But the figurative exposition turns all the prophetic portion into an enigma, which but few can understand, and which must be useless to all others; it first covers the prospect with a deep mist, and then dissuades from farther search as unnecessary and even dangerous. While, on the other hand, the literal interpretation leaves it open to our view, just as the Spirit of God has spread it before us, a land of promise, goodly to the eye, with all the rich and varied beauty of earth, and with all the blessed light and purity of heaven.

Lastly, The spiritual interpretation is that which uproots selfishness from the heart, and enthrones on its ruins the love of Christ, and the love of our brethren. But by the figurative interpretation, the Gentile Church is taught to appropriate solely to herself all the promises of God, where Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem are most clearly addressed, regardless of the wrong done to the outcasts of Zion, and of the dark cloud which is thus brought over that glorious attribute of her Lord, his truth and faithfulness. On the other hand, the literal interpretation leads us to rejoice, with a pure and unselfish joy, in the fulness of God's love to his ancient people. It calls us, as Gentile Christians, to be willing ourselves to decrease, if only the faithfulness of our Lord may be vindicated and his glory increased; and our own heart's desire and prayer be fulfilled in the salvation of Israel.

We have thus shown the full warrant which God has given to his Church for the literal interpretation of prophecy, from his own express command, from the nature of the prophecies themselves, from the conduct of the apostles, the history of the Jewish nation, and from the solemn and repeated declarations of the Lord Jesus. We have seen its consistency with the statements of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and its peculiar

claims, above every other, to the title of a spiritual interpretation. The barriers are thus removed, and the entrance is thrown open into this wide and glorious field of Divine truth. Others, more experienced, will lead you shortly to some of those bright scenes of heavenly promise which are there presented to your view; and may He who has the key of David, who openeth, and no man shutteth, prosper their efforts with a large and abundant blessing! Suffer me, however, before closing the present subject, to apply it to ourselves in a few practical lessons.

And, first, let us every one learn to exercise a more simple and childlike faith in the Word of God. In an age of excitement and various information like the present, when even religious knowledge of a certain kind, is so widely diffused, there is great danger of our forgetting that simple but important truth, which follows our text, "The just shall live by faith." This is the article of a standing or falling Church. It is one thing to have theological learning; it is another and a higher thing simply to believe. In truth, the great object and true perfection of scriptural learning is, to bring back the soul to the docility of a little child. Then is the Christian most truly and deeply wise, when, like Mary,

he comes to sit with unquestioning faith at the feet of his Lord and Saviour. Let us learn, then, my Christian friends, from this inquiry, that hard but most profitable lesson. Let us read the prophecies with a simple faith; and instead of harbouring the unbelieving thought, "If the Lord should make windows in heaven, then might these things be:"* let us rather use that answer to the tempter with which God himself supplies us: "If it be marvellous in the eyes of this people, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of Hosts."† It is true of the system of Christian doctrine, as it is of the Church of Christ itself—if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. A livelier faith in the Jewish prophecies will enrich our souls in every department of Divine truth, and brace them to a higher standard of devotedness and love.

Next, let us learn and practise a deeper interest than ever, in the welfare and conversion of the sons of Israel. What a motive of thrilling power do these prophecies supply for this great duty! When a shipwrecked voyager, all but lifeless, is rescued from the waves, what a breathless interest is taken in the steps used for his recovery. But if this voyager were the sole

• 2 Kings vii. 2.

† Zech. viii. 6.

heir of some great empire, and on whose life all its peace and glory were suspended, how wonderfully would that interest be increased, how intense would it become ! Now just such is the present state of the nation of Israel. The daughter of Zion is not dead ; the damsel only sleepeth. For two thousand years the animation has been suspended, and the breath of life might seem to be quite extinct. But her Redeemer is mighty to save, and soon, very soon he will bid her arise. Meanwhile, when their state seems most hopeless, we are assured that the world's salvation depends on their recovery, for "What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead ?" * It is the sight of Israel's returning glory, which is to pierce through the dark cloud of unbelief in these latter days with a quickening and gladdening power. "The Gentiles shall come to her light, and their kings to the brightness of her rising." † How deep, then, should be our interest, how earnest our prayers, for that conversion of Israel, which will be as life from the dead to an unbelieving world !

Further, let us enter on that boundless field of meditation and hope, which the Spirit of God sets before us in the Jewish prophecies. In this great and crowded city how intense is the thirst

* Romans xi. 15.

† Isaiah lx. 3.

for perishable gain, by which thousands are urged onward from day to day! O, when will the children of light learn to emulate, in their heavenly calling, the wisdom of the world! Here, in the word of prophecy, God has set before his people mines of imperishable riches, and treasures of bright and blessed hope, that will enrich our souls unto life eternal. Let us, then, with humility, with prayer, with earnest diligence, search for those treasures of knowledge and wisdom, which the Lord of all grace has hid from ages and generations, but which he has reserved for his Church in this latter day! And let us be assured, that while with undoubting faith, we search into the oracles of God, every part of his truth will be profitable to our souls. The word of prophecy will light up even the dark world with the clear tokens of the Saviour's presence, till at length the day will dawn upon us, and the Day-star, in all his glory, shall arise in our hearts.

Finally, Let us present all our knowledge and all our labours, as a free-will offering at the cross of our exalted Lord. This is the great and crowning lesson of the whole subject. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The more we search into its sacred page, the more shall we find that all its blessings and its

mysteries revolve around the Sun of Righteousness. The more simply we receive his word, the more shall we find his presence in the sanctuary of his own truth, giving union, and life, and quickening power, to every sentence of inspired Scripture. And thus, while we grow in a deeper insight into the hopes of the Church, and the coming glory of Israel, we shall also advance in humility, and grace, and love, and holiness. The grace and the glory of Christ will shine more and more brightly upon our hearts, and our souls will be filled with fervent longing for his appearing and kingdom. He is the desire of all nations, the Prince of the kings of the earth. From Him all prophecy proceeds, in Him it centres, and to Him it returns, as the great fulfiller of its glorious promises. It is the light of his holy and gracious countenance which can alone restore peace, and beauty, and gladness, to the stormy waves and gloomy wilderness of this fallen world. Then will the dumbest Christians look back with amazement on their past apathy and indifference to these hopes of Israel, which are linked so closely with their own. For "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the

poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”* May we, by faith, now anticipate that blessed time; may we rest on the promise of our Lord, and wait for his appearing, that Israel’s redemption may be to us a day of joy and of gladness, and may usher our happy and ransomed souls into his everlasting kingdom !

• Isaiah xxix. 18, 19.

LECTURE III.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

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LORD FITZGERALD AND VESCI.

GALATIANS III. 15—17.

“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

THE covenant with Abraham, mentioned in the text, is in reality that which Christians are wont

to call "the covenant of *grace*," and "the *new* covenant," though this fact has unhappily been greatly lost sight of. Christians of former days have separated from the original compact the portion which more immediately concerned the deliverance of their own souls; and those of later generations have apparently become unconscious, not only that there exist *other* articles intimately connected with this matter, but that this important concern itself has its foundation, in the way of covenant, in those promises which were made with the fathers more than 2,000 years before Christ. Let me first, therefore, briefly draw your attention to two or three circumstances concerning the *time* of the Abrahamic covenant which are involved in the text, and which it is indispensable to a right understanding of our subject, that we should in the outset be fully agreed upon.

1. First, the Apostle declares that the Covenant of promise was given to Abraham, and confirmed of God in Christ, 430 years before the giving the law.

2. Secondly, he states, that the Sinai or Mosaical covenant, promulgated in the time of Moses, did not *disannul*, or in any way supersede, the stipulations of the covenant with Abraham. All that it did, therefore, was, to introduce a

temporary and intermediate dispensation, which placed the covenant of promise in a state of suspension.

3. Thirdly, the mention of CHRIST, as the party with whom this covenant was confirmed, points to the time when the Mosaical or temporary covenant was *abolished*, and the covenant of promise formally brought into operation, viz. at the *death of Christ*; as is expressly declared in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Apostle says: “For this cause Christ is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the *first* testament, (meaning thereby the Mosaical),* they which are called might receive the promise of *eternal inheritance*. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force *after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*”†

4. Further, I beg you to observe, that if the covenant could not be disannulled by the *introduction* of the law, still less could it be so by the *abolishing* or *removal* of it. The Apostle

* See verse 19. The Mosaical covenant is called the *first* Testament, and the *old* Testament, not because it was first *given*, but the first that came formally into operation.

† Heb. ix. 15—17.

insists, that had it been but a man's covenant only nothing could have been taken from it, neither anything added to its prejudice: how much more, when it is *God's* covenant, ought it to be regarded as "ordered in all things and *sure!*" He may choose to bring some of its provisions into operation sooner than others; just as the executors under a will may choose to begin first with certain of its conditions, and to defer others: yet none can be lawfully dispensed with; all must in due course be fulfilled.

I. Let us now inquire into the *particulars* of this covenant; in regard to which I must admonish you, that they were given at different *periods* to Abraham, with more or less of enlargement; and not only to Abraham, but also to his son Isaac, and to his grandson Jacob. Wherefore, the Apostle calls it in one place "the *covenants* of promise," in the plural; and in another place, God, when speaking to Israel concerning it, calls it, "The covenant which I made with your *fathers.*"*

The first promise is in Gen. xii. 1—3, when God directs Abraham to get him out from his kindred and from his father's house unto a *land* which he would show him: "And I will make of thee a *great nation*;" (saith the Lord), "and I will bless

* Ephes. ii. 12; Exod. vi. 4; Deut. iv. 31; vii. 8.

thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee: and curse him that curseth thee: *and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*"

The second time God visits him at Bethel, and says, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to *thee* will I give it, *and to thy seed for ever.* And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."*

In chap. xv. we read, that God brings him forth abroad and says, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them." And he said unto him, "So shall thy seed be." Then follows the account of a token, which God gave him for his encouragement, which will fall under consideration presently; and the narrative of the whole transaction thus concludes: "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy *seed* have I given this land, from the river of Egypt

* Gen. xiii. 14—17.

unto the great river, the river Euphrates, the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaim, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

In Gen. xvii. we have the institution of the rite of circumcision; on which occasion there is a further confirmation and enlargement of particulars. "Behold, (saith the Lord), my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a *father of many nations*. Neither shall thy name any more be called *Abram*, but thy name shall be called *Abraham*; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will stablish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an *everlasting* covenant, *to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee*. And I will give unto *thee*, AND *to thy seed after thee*, the land wherein thou art a stranger, and all the land of Canaan for an *everlasting possession*; and *I will be their God*."•
"And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name *Sarai*, but *Sarah* shall her name be. And I will bless *her*,

• Verse 4—8.

and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother of nations: kings of people* shall be of her.”*

About thirty years afterwards Abraham was called to offer up Isaac, the son borne him by Sarah; on which occasion God, “willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an *oath*; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie,” viz. his promise and his oath, the heirs of promise “might have strong consolation.”—“By myself have I sworn, (saith the Lord,) for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; *and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies*; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”†

In the next instance the covenant is established with *Isaac*; to whom the Lord appeared, and said, “Go not down into Egypt, but sojourn in this land, and I will bless thee; for unto *thee*, AND *to thy seed* I will give *all these countries*, and will perform the oath which I swear

* Verses 15, 16.

† Gen. xxii. 15—18.

unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and I will give unto thy seed all these countries, and in *thy* seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”*

Finally, the Lord establishes this covenant with *Jacob*, and saith, “I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: *the land whereon thou liest to thee* will I give it, AND to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, *I am with thee*; and will keep thee in all places whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”†

Such are the promises referred to in the text. I will now briefly sum up the heads of them:—

1. First, there is the promise to Abraham of one pre-eminent *seed*, who we are assured in the text is CHRIST; and also the promise of a numerous seed or offspring, conveyed in the assurance that God would make a great nation of him, and that his seed should be as difficult to number as the stars of heaven, the dust of the earth, and the sand which is by the sea-shore.

* Gen. xxvi. 2—4.

† Gen. xxviii. 13—15.

2. There is an *inheritance* promised, for an *everlasting possession*, viz., that land in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sojourned as strangers, extending from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, and from the river of Egypt to Damascus. Note also here particularly, that this land is promised,—first, to that one pre-eminent seed, which is Christ; secondly, to the seed in general; and thirdly, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob individually: the promise being frequently repeated, “To thee, AND to *thy seed*.” Thus, also, the Lord declared to Moses, “And I appeared unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob,” “and I have established my covenant with *them*, to give *them* the land of Canaan, the land of their *pilgrimage*, wherein they were strangers.”*

3. God promises to be *the God of Abraham*, and his seed.

4. That in him, and in his seed, (i. e., in the one pre-eminent seed especially, and in his offspring generally,) shall all families or nations of the earth be blessed.

5. That his seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

6. That they shall be *kings* of peoples or nations.

I have yet to point out two or three circum-

* Exod. vi. 3, 4.

stances connected with this covenant that are to be understood either in a typical manner, or in the way of token and earnest; otherwise they may be confounded with the particulars just enumerated.

1. To a superficial observer it might appear that Isaac was the pre-eminent seed intended—the child of promise; for indeed the circumstances of his birth were remarkable. A careful consideration however of this matter will show, that a *greater* than Isaac is shadowed forth by him. For after the promise of a seed has been repeatedly made, God says of Sarah, “And I will bless her and give thee a son *also* of her.” It is afterwards promised that this son shall be born at a set time in the following year; in order, doubtless, that Abraham might more evidently see the hand of God in the matter, and understand it as a token and pledge of the future seed.* Moreover, after Isaac is born, God still sustains the promise of the seed, both to him, and afterwards to his son Jacob, saying to each of them, “In thee, and in *thy* seed, shall all nations be blessed.”

This is a common circumstance in the Scriptures, when a prophecy is given, the fulfilment of which is to take place at some remote period; viz. either that some other thing is also predicted, the accomplishment of which is to be more immediate,

* Gen. xvii. 19, 21.

and to serve as a sign and pledge of the more distant one; or some partial and inchoate fulfilment is vouchsafed of the chief promise itself, which serves as an earnest of the remainder. We have instances of an exactly similar character with this sign given to Abraham. The birth of Solomon, e. g. was as a pledge to David of that same promised seed, which was to sit upon his throne. And afterwards, in the days of Ahaz, when the promise was again repeated in those words, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," a more immediate token is given by the birth of another child, Maher-shalal-hashbaz, who was borne by the prophetess, apparently the wife of Isaiah. That neither Solomon nor the child of the prophetess are the parties mainly intended, is again manifest from the promise being still sustained down into the time of Jeremiah, who foretels that the Branch of Righteousness should still grow up unto David.*

2. A second thing is foretold in this covenant, as a sign or earnest of the inheriting of the *land*. For Abraham asks, "Lord God, whereby shall I *know* that I shall inherit it?"† thus requesting a *token*, in the way of confirmation and assurance. The Lord grants a double one: the first, for the satisfaction of Abraham himself; the second, for

* Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15.

† Gen. xv. 8.

the satisfaction of his Church in subsequent ages. For with Abraham he immediately enters into the most solemn form of covenant practised in those times, which would entirely remove all doubt from the mind of the believing patriarch himself. He directs him to take a heifer, and other animals, and having divided them to dispose the pieces in proper order; after which is seen a burning lamp, the symbol of the Lord's presence, passing between those pieces; and it is immediately added, "That in the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

But, secondly, during this solemn proceeding, a horror of great darkness comes on Abraham, and the Lord informs him that his seed should be a stranger in a land not theirs, and that afterwards God would judge that nation, and bring them out with great substance; that in the meanwhile Abraham should be gathered to his fathers in peace, but that his posterity of the fourth generation should come hither *again*. This horror of great darkness, together with the prediction of Israel's bondage in Egypt, (a land not theirs,) and then of their coming *again* into Canaan, strikingly shadows forth that greater and still more horrible period of affliction and bondage, which they have

now endured for nearly eighteen centuries in strange lands, and their final redemption and restoration to Palestine, accompanied by judgments on the nations which have oppressed them. At the same time it is evident, that the fulfilment of the Exodus from Egypt, and the occupation of Canaan under Joshua, could be no token to Abraham himself; seeing that he was to sleep with his fathers previous to these events coming to pass. But they would constitute a striking pledge for believers in subsequent ages; who, looking back upon this past earnest, would be assured both of Israel's future redemption, and of their own blessed rest in that inheritance.

That they were only a token and earnest of a greater deliverance and of a more glorious occupation of the land, hereafter to be enjoyed, is manifest from what the Spirit of prophecy declares, under the law, of a time when these things should no longer come into mind, being eclipsed by the superior glory of the real event intended, and cast aside like all other mere types and shadows. For twice Jeremiah is moved to say, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the *north*, (mark that: not from

to the event, that in order to perform this mercy to Jacob it was needful that the eminent Seed promised, the Lord Jesus Christ, should for this purpose actually DIE, that through the *blood* of this *everlasting covenant* he might perfect his brethren. Yet the apostle declares expressly, that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of *Abraham* might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.* Now in regard to this not being previously understood, it is not that the sufferings of Christ were not beforehand testified of by the prophets ;—nor is it that we cannot now, if we take their language in its fair literal sense, perceive that Messiah was to be bruised for our iniquities : but I say, nevertheless, that previous to the event, their language utterly failed of elevating the soul to a due conception of what was required by the justice and holiness of God on the one hand, and what his mercy, and faithfulness, and love was, on the other hand, capable of accomplishing. The most prejudiced must on this head admit, that he hath indeed done for us “ exceeding abundantly above all that we could ask or think.”

2. But further than this, before God can manifest himself as the God of any, their *heart* must be renewed in knowledge and true holiness,

* Gal. iii. 13.

after the image of Him that created it: and this we have had an earnest of, far beyond all expectation again, in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, testified of by abundant miraculous gifts, and witnessed also in the souls of all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, by an abundance of holy fruits. It will be sufficient, in order to show that this also was declared by the prophets as what was to come to pass, when this covenant should be in operation, to quote St. Paul, who twice in the Epistle to the Hebrews alleges from Jeremiah, that it was to form a main feature of it. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a *new covenant* with the house of *Israel* AND with the house of *Judah*; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord. I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."* I need not remind you that the apostle is here urging on the unbelieving Jews, that the Mosaical covenant was not to be permanent; and that the gifts

* Heb. viii. 8—12; x. 16; Jer. xxxi. 31—34.

and grace which they then witnessed in the Christian Jews was the fruit of this new covenant, now brought into operation, as foretold by the prophet.

A further remark is here invited, concerning the holy remnant gathered out unto the Lord, *previous* to this covenant coming into force; and of whom we cannot reasonably question that the law of God was in *their* heart, consequently that they were regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Speaking however as in the text, (after the manner of men),—had it been but a *man's* testament, the testator might, nevertheless, at any period previous to his death, have anticipated its provisions, and *given* to any of the parties included therein those things which he had willed to them; whilst yet the parties could not have *claimed* them until after his decease. So it was in regard to all those saints who obtained a good report through faith before Christ died; they obtained it by virtue and in anticipation of this covenant; and yet, that the covenant which promised this special grace was not *formally* in operation is clear from what is written in John vii. 39, viz., “that the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus *was not yet glorified.*”

3. I pass to another promise in the covenant, viz. that Abraham's seed should possess the gate of his enemies. How much more than the words seem to imply did Isaiah anticipate from this,

when he declared, that when Israel's God should come to save him, "the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; that the lame man should leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb should sing."* Yet, even in this manner, have we seen Christ occupying the gate of his enemies, and destroying the works of the devil. Yea, without making myself further tedious by particularizing, we know from what Christ declared to the two disciples travelling to Emmaus, that the prophets also foretold his resurrection, whereby he was to possess the gate of another enemy, even *death*.

4. One more article of the covenant I must draw attention to. How little was it understood previous to the event, that the election from among the Gentiles,—which we now see is being called out, and who are destined to be made partakers with that election or remnant which has been throughout gathering from among Israel,—I say, how little was it understood that it was contained in the promise, that in Abraham and his seed should all families or nations of the earth be blessed. Yet Paul in Galatians declares, "That the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."†

* Is. xxxv. 5, 6.

† Gal. iii. 8.

and in his Epistle to the Romans he quotes Moses, David, Hosea, and Isaiah, as all testifying, that the Gentiles were to be thus made partakers, and to be accounted for a seed.*

But what have we Gentiles done in return for this mercy? Why we have trampled down and despised Israel after the flesh for so many ages, that we have forgotten our relative positions. We, who occupy but a parenthesis as it were in the covenant, have boasted ourselves as if we were the principal party in it! We, who can enjoy nothing, but as it comes to us through the root and fatness of the Israelitish olive-tree, have gloried as if we bore the root, instead of the root bearing us; and have gone nigh to exclude Israel after the flesh from all further interest in the blessings of their own covenant!

5. I have now, brethren, shown you how God's thoughts have exceeded *our* thoughts, in regard to certain particulars more or less fulfilled: such of you as are acquainted with the prophets must be aware that equally glorious things are unfolded by them from this covenant, which have *not* yet come to pass. For instance, Moses assures us, in regard to the future restoration of Israel, "If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God

* Rom. x.

gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee; and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy *fathers* possessed.”*

An equally remarkable prophecy of Moses is contained in the Book of Leviticus, in which, having spoken of their sufferings in the lands of their enemies, and of their subsequent humiliation, “then (saith the Lord) will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham, will I remember; *and*—I will remember THE LAND.”† Ezekiel foretels in regard to the holy remnant who lived during Israel’s affliction, and who complained that they were cut off, as regarded their parts or lots in the inheritance, and their hope lost:—“Thus saith the Lord; Behold, O my people, I will open your *graves*, and cause you *to come up* out of your graves, and bring you into the *land of Israel*; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, *when I have opened your graves*, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, *and shall put my Spirit in you*, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I THE LORD, have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.”‡ Agreeing with the literal meaning of this place is the promise made to Daniel, about this same time, that he personally

* Deut. xxx. 4.

† Lev. xxvi. 37—42.

‡ Ezek. xxxvii. 11.

should rest until the end of things foretold to him should arrive; and that then he should stand in *his* lot at the end of the days.* And David declared, that he had fainted, unless he had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living;† which land the Council of Nice expounded of Palestine, renewed or regenerated; even as Ezekiel and Isaiah predicted, that it shall become as Eden, and the garden of the Lord.‡ And further, St. Paul, when before Agrippa, speaking of the resurrection, says, that it was the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which the twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hoped to come;—demanding also of Agrippa, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”§

It is also shown by the prophets, that the whole nation, when restored, shall be *sanctified*; Moses declaring, that God should circumcise their heart, and the heart of their seed, to love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul;|| and Isaiah, that the people of Zion should then be *all* righteous.¶ In like manner it is foretold, in reference to possessing the gate of their enemies, and becoming kings of nations, that their children shall be princes in all the earth;

* Dan. xii. 13. † Ps. xxvii. 13. ‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 35; Is. li.

§ Acts xxvi. 6—8.

|| Deut. xxx. 6.

¶ Isa. lx. 21.

that they shall have dominion over all nations; that the nation and kingdom that will not serve them shall perish; that there shall be no more sorrowing nor sickness, that death shall be altogether swallowed up in victory; and that then the tabernacle of God shall be with them, and he shall dwell with them, they having David their king over them, and the Lord God at their head.*

I now would ask,—Ought not what God hath fulfilled already to be regarded as a most sure token and earnest of the fulfilment of the remainder in his own good time? O, let not the marvellous and extraordinary character of the things predicted, as yet to come to pass, hinder us from receiving them: those already accomplished are equally wonderful; and were that which remains a hundred times more difficult to accomplish, yet nothing is too hard for the Lord. But *is* there anything more difficult for God to effect in the resurrection of *all* who have had the faith of Abraham, than in the resurrection of Christ? *Is* it more incredible that God should renew the *earth*, than that he should regenerate the *human heart*? Is it more wonderful, that Israel should be brought

* Ps. xlv. 16. Isa. lx. 12; xxxv. 10. xxv. 7. Hos. xiii. 14. Zech. viii. 3.

back and grafted into their own *natural* olive-tree, than that God should have made a way for us Gentiles, who were once given up to vile affections and to a reprobate mind, to be grafted *contrary to nature* into the Hebrew stock? No; the same God who hath wrought the one is able to accomplish the other; and the same God is pledged and covenanted by an oath to accomplish *both*.

III. It will tend greatly to confirm our confidence in the expectation of these things, if we consider further the evidence which we possess, in the New Testament Scriptures, of those articles of the covenant which more especially concern Israel after the flesh.

That ought to be sufficient, in one word, which the Holy Ghost put into the mouth of Zacharias concerning Christ, viz: "That he was raised up as a horn of salvation for *us (Israel)* in the house of God's servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be *saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us*; to perform the *mercy to our fathers*, and to remember his holy covenant, *the oath which he sware to our father Abraham*; that he would grant unto *us (Israel, remember,)* that we, *being delivered out of the hand of our enemies,*

might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, *all the days of our life.*" Nevertheless, I will, with as much brevity as the subject will admit, bring before you three particulars, viz: First, the restoration of the literal Israel; Secondly, the pardoning and sanctification of the entire nation; Thirdly, the recovery of their land.

1. In regard to the first point, viz., that there are promises intended for the literal Israel, what can be clearer than the declaration of the Apostle, "God hath *not* cast away his *people*?" For that he is here speaking of *Israel after the flesh* is manifest, inasmuch as he instances himself as of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin; and points to a larger election from among them, which had already obtained the justifying righteousness they sought for, whilst *the rest were blinded*. Now of this residue, who were blinded, it will not be questioned, that *they* constituted the literal Israel: what then is to become of *them*? Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid! but "blindness in part is happened unto Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*" This of itself utters no uncertain sound, as to a restoration of Israel after the times of the Gentiles are completed; but to put the matter beyond dispute, Paul

immediately after adds, "And so **ALL ISRAEL shall be saved**; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins."*

This suggests an important remark: viz. that, although the new covenant was formally brought into operation at the death of Christ, yet, (as we plainly see,) the fulfilment of some of its articles has been suspended or deferred. In regard indeed to the *remainder*, we have seen only an incipient fulfilment: none have as yet received the promise in that fulness which is intended: we still groan, and have to contend with enemies, and are waiting for the adoption—to wit, the redemption of the body.† But here we learn the *reason* of this suspension, and the *term* of it; viz. until God has completed the number of his elect, which he is now gathering from among the Gentiles. Then *all* Israel will be saved; and then, also, the Gentiles will enjoy the consummation of *their* bliss in the everlasting kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.‡

There is also another circumstance to be noticed here, in regard to the restoration of the literal Israel, viz. their wonderful preservation

* Rom. xi. 2, 3, 25.

† Rom. viii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 1—3.

‡ See Acts xv.

for this purpose, notwithstanding the fierceness, the subtlety, the malice, and the long continuance of the persecution they have endured. An intimation of this is given in a part of the covenant I have not yet noticed; viz. where God declares to Jacob, “And, behold, I am *with thee*, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” *

This patriarch, whose names *Jacob* and *Israel* are constantly used by the prophets for the whole nation, is evidently treated with here with reference to all the seed. What is said of him is first *typical*; for it refers to his being an exile from his father’s house and from the promised land; and God promises to be “*with him*” during all his bondage to Laban, and throughout his temptation, and to bring him again into the land. And, secondly, like the child Isaac born to Abraham, it is intended as an *earnest and pledge* to Israel in general; that if these promises of God were fulfilled to their great ancestor in the events of his life, so should they on the larger scale be accomplished in them, whom God would *be with* to keep them in all places whither *they* should be driven, as a little sanctuary to them,

* Gen. xxviii. 15.

and bring them again into that same land, and would never leave them nor forsake them *until* he had done that which he had spoken of. The prophets are moved by the Spirit to take up the matter in this way. Hear Jeremiah: "Fear thou not, O my *servant* JACOB, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O *Israel*: for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and JACOB *shall return*, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. *For I am WITH thee*, saith the Lord, to *save* (or *keep*) thee: though I make a full end of all nations, whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."* Almost the same words are used by him in another place. Hear Isaiah also: "But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O *Jacob*, and he that formed thee, O *Israel*; Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, *I will be WITH thee*; (or rather, as the original, *I am WITH thee*;) and through the rivers, they shall not *overflow* thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the

* Jer. xxx. 10, 11; xli. 27, 28.

Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.”—“Fear not: I am *with* thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;—*every one* that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”*

2. I proceed to the second particular which I purposed to prove from the New Testament, viz. the *pardon and sanctification* of the *entire nation*, when brought back to Palestine; which is declared in the same place in Romans that assures us of the *restoration* of the literal Israel: “There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, who shall *turn away ungodliness* from Jacob: for this is my *covenant* unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” But further than this, he declares in another verse more expressly of Israel: “That if the *first fruit* be holy, the *lump* is holy; and if the *root* be holy, so are the *branches*.” The first fruits here appear to be those saints, who, in consideration of this covenant, have been from the time of Abraham to Paul gathered out of Israel and sanctified. These are here declared to be an earnest and pledge

* Isa. xliii. 1—7. See also 2 Kings xiii. 23.

of what God will hereafter do with the *lump*, or entire nation. The root of *Israel* must, I take it, be the same as the root of *David*; and as “both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one,”* so every branch in him is holy likewise. It is by *anticipation*, however, that *Israel* is here spoken of as the lump, and as the branches destined to be holy. In this respect, “God *hath not beheld* iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in *Israel* :”† it is the covenant purpose of God to bless;‡ it cannot be reversed: as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes; “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,” or change of mind.§

There is nothing contrary in all this to God’s dealings with those *individuals* whom he sanctifies; the conversion of the heart being at all times an act of sovereign grace; as you, dear brethren, who are sanctified and enlightened by the Spirit, well know from your experience. All those holy ones, who have obtained a good report through faith, would have perished in unbelief, like those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, but for the mercy and power of God. Paul instances himself as one of the election of Grace: and

* Heb. ii. 11.

† Numb. xxiii. 21.

‡ Numb. xxiii. 20.

§ Rom. xi. 28.

a remarkable instance indeed he was; who, up to the moment of his conversion, was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious. But he obtained mercy, (he tells us,) for this express cause, “That in him first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a *pattern* (or *type*, as it is in the original,) to them which should *hereafter* believe in Christ to life everlasting.”*

3. I may be the more brief in regard to the third point, viz. the future possession of the *land*, because it is so necessarily involved in the promise of a national restoration of the *people*. For, unless they are to be restored to their own inheritance, they are *now*, nationally, as much a people as they can be. And by the same rule, to restore the *land* would be useless, unless the *people* were to be restored likewise; for, to whom is it to be restored, if not to Israel? But there is a declaration made by our Lord Jesus, in regard to the *land*, of a character precisely similar with that which Paul was moved to write in regard to the literal *Israel*. For does the latter assert, that blindness in part hath happened to Israel *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in?* so our Lord expressly declares, “That they shall be led away captive into all nations; and that *Jerusalem*—the metropolis of the *land*—shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the*

* 1 Tim. i. 16.

Gentiles be fulfilled."* As surely therefore as, in the one case, Israel is to be restored, when the election is completed from among the Gentiles, so surely, when the remainder of those Gentiles shall have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and their times of *domination* over captive Israel shall be completed, the Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion, in the holy land, and choose Jerusalem again.† Yea, he gave an *earnest* in regard to those, who in the meanwhile *sleep* in him, by raising from the dead, after he had himself burst the grave, many bodies of the saints which slept, who went as a blessed first fruits of this covenant into Jerusalem, the holy city, and appeared unto many.‡

IV. Now lest any should, notwithstanding what has been said, consider that the promise of the land has been sufficiently fulfilled, by the occupation of it by Israel before and after the Babylonish captivity, bear with me whilst I finally set before you a summary of the reasons, why such a fulfilment is

* Luke xxi. 24.

† Zech. ii. 12.

‡ Matt. xxvii. 53. This is probably among the events to which Daniel alludes, when he predicts, that between the period of Messiah's being cut off, and the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, he should confirm the *covenant* with many. For surely the resurrection of many of the saints which slept, was as much calculated to encourage and strengthen those, who had yet to fight the good fight of faith, as the outpouring of the Spirit. (Dan. ix. 26, 27.)

not consistent with the covenant under consideration.

1. First, and principally, the covenant of Abraham was not formally in force *until after the death of Christ*, and it is unreasonable to allege, that an occupation of Palestine under *another* covenant, is the same thing as the occupation of the land under *that particular covenant*, in which such occupation is promised. And here I beg you to observe the striking fact, that Israel's seed was not led up to the possession of Canaan until *after* the Mosaical compact was introduced, which *suspended* the covenant with Abraham; and that as soon as the time arrived for the *removing* of the Mosaical dispensation out of the way, Israel was *ejected* from the land, scattered to the winds, and have now continued for nearly eighteen long centuries *outcasts* from their inheritance !

2. Secondly, as to the *particulars* of the covenant: if *some* of Israel's seed have inherited, there has, nevertheless, been no inheriting at all by *Christ*, the great Seed, to whom the land was especially promised in the first instance, and therefore called by the prophets, "Immanuel's land," and "the Lord's land."* The mere circumstance that Christ was born and dwelt in the land is no proof

* Is. viii. 8 ; Hos. ix. 3.

that he had any inheritance therein: the *fathers* dwelt there, and confessed that they were only strangers and pilgrims in the land. And that Jesus considered that he had not so much as to set his foot on, is clear from his own words,—“Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”* Yea, even David, who for a while bore rule in the land, knew well that it was not under those circumstances of glory, and dominion, and stability implied in the covenant; and he consequently declares himself to be a stranger and a sojourner therein, as all his fathers were.

3. In regard to the seed *in general*, who are to inherit it, they are to be *all holy*: is it sufficient to say, that this has been fulfilled in the seed who inherited from Joshua to Christ; who in “the lump” were merely carnal men, complained of repeatedly as *uncircumcised* in heart and ears, and *always* resisting the Holy Ghost?†

4. Next, they were to possess the gate of their enemies; and were to be princes over other lands. But they complain that “other lords have had dominion *over them* ;” and they have been repeatedly oppressed and trodden down. Seven periods of servitude are reckoned in the short

* Matt. ix. 20.

† Acts vii. 51.

space from Joshua to Saul ; and under their kings they were frequently tributary to neighbouring states.

5. Nor have they ever enjoyed the land to the *extent* covenanted ; no, not even in the palmy days of Solomon. The countries between the Jordan and the Euphrates were not *possessed* by Israelites, they were only tributary ; and other nations were similarly circumstanced ; the Sidonians and Tyrians were allies, not subjects ; and Rezon was an adversary to Solomon in Damascus all his life.*

6. Lastly, the land was covenanted as an *everlasting* possession. But Isaiah complains to the Lord, “ The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while ; ”† and, truly, during that little while, their enjoyment of it was repeatedly interrupted by others obtaining possession and mastery over them ; and twice by their being altogether cast out : whereas the prophet Amos distinctly speaks of a time in which the Lord will plant them upon their land, “ and they shall *no more* be pulled up out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.”‡ It would be equally inconsistent also to call this an *everlasting covenant*, (as God did to Abraham,) if certain of the promises therein were to be only fulfilled for a time. But

* Josh. xvi. 10 ; xvii. 13 ; 1 Kings iv. 21, 24 ; ix. 20, 21 ; xi. 25.

† Is. xiii. 18.

‡ Amos. xi. 15.

“He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, which covenant he made with Abraham, and his *oath* unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto *Jacob* for a law, to Israel for an *everlasting* covenant, saying,—Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.”*

Such, brethren, are the instances in which the alleged fulfilment comes short of the promises. Do not think, however, from what I have advanced, on this head, that I lay any undue emphasis upon the mere *land* of Palestine, or attach undue importance to its possession. I consider the land nothing in itself: any other spot in the universe might equally serve as a platform for the purpose of exhibiting God’s glory, whether in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath. The land of *Palestine* becomes important only because it is the land of *promise*: this it is which invests it with its peculiar interest. God is by his covenant and oath as much pledged to restore and regenerate that *land*, as he is to restore and regenerate his *people*. If these articles may be disannulled, we have no assurance of the accomplishment of *any* article not yet fulfilled: our *own final redemption*, to be consummated in a glorious resurrection, depends on no surer promise: and

* Ps. cv. 8—11.

if those for which I contend are not to be fulfilled, then have we *nothing certain* in God's word. Oh ! it is derogatory to God to conclude that what he covenants with an oath, and ratifies with the blood of his Son, is to be taken at less than his word ; it is to mistake the shadow for the substance—a meagre, inadequate, defective, temporary fulfilment, which was but an earnest and token, for *the plentitude of the everlasting covenant !*

No, brethren, we shall see greater things than these : we shall see Israel brought back and glorified in the manner I have stated. Then also will *another* article of the covenant be fulfilled with a largeness and a glory never yet witnessed ; I mean, Israel's becoming a blessing unto all nations. They have already done something as witnesses for God against idolatry and infidelity, and as conservators of the Scriptures, yea, even in their unbelief ; but when they shall be restored, they shall exhibit a picture, never yet beheld, of an entire nation, *every individual of which will be personally holy*. And this their conversion and their unity, and their subordination, together with the striking manifestation of the glory of God in fulfilling these things unto them, is declared both by prophets and apostles to be the great appointed means of

bringing in the entire of the Gentiles; so that they shall prove as life from the dead to a lost and perishing world. Then they among the heathen *will* say, "The Lord hath done great things for them."* God will "make them a name and a praise among all people of the earth;"† "the nations shall see, and be confounded at all their might, they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and fear because of *thee*."‡ Yea, Israel shall then also become a great *missionary* nation: "God will speak the word, and great shall be the company of them that publish it;"—"they shall declare his glory among the Gentiles; and all the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him."§

I ventured to say, brethren, that *we* shall see these great things; which certainly all shall, in their *consummation*, who have in them the great evidence of their being effectually made partakers of the new covenant, viz. the law of God so written in their hearts, that they inwardly love and delight in it. If only you have this, and are aiming to walk in the steps of the faith of your father Abraham, you shall be accounted the

* Ps. cxxvi. 2. † Zeph. iii. 20. ‡ Micah vii. 17.

§ Ps. lxviii. 11; Is. lxvi. 19; Ps. xxii. 27.

children of Abraham, and stand in your lot, whatever it may be, in the end of the days.* You shall “see the good of the Lord’s chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and glory with his inheritance.”† The Church shall then, like the queen of Sheba, witness a greater than Solomon’s wisdom; and when she hath seen the glorious *house* that he hath “built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel,” then, like Sheba’s queen again, there shall be no more spirit in her; and she shall say, “Howbeit, I *believed not the words*, until I came, and mine eyes had *seen* it; and, behold, the HALF *was not told me!*”‡

* Rom. iv. 12; vii. 25; viii. 1.

† Ps. cvi.

‡ 1 Kings x. 7; and compare Heb. iii. 6, Rev. ii. 17, Heb. i. 6, Matt. xix. 28, Rev. xx. 4, Is. lii. 1, and Phil. iii. 21.

LECTURE IV.

THE COVENANT WITH DAVID.

BY THE REV. C. J. GOODHART, A.M.,
MINISTER OF ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHAPEL, READING.

2 SAMUEL VII. 17.

“ According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.”

“ THE Word of God,” my dear brethren, “ is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” This is a powerful description of the way in which the Word of God deals with the individual sinner when it has reached him by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. It places him apart, it singles him out from the whole world, and he stands conscious that God is saying unto him, “ Thou art the man.” And he feels under the

power of that Word, as if there were not another creature besides himself on whom the eye of God fixed. Have you ever experienced—let me ask before I pass on—have you ever experienced this personal dealing of God the Spirit with your heart? Have you ever felt singled out thus to stand alone? Have you ever been so set apart from the whole world, that you seemed alone, and the eye of God upon you? But, my dear brethren, the Word of God does not leave the inner here. When by this individual application of the power of God's Spirit to the soul—it has brought him to Christ, it soon leads him on to feel and to understand that he is the member of a family. It makes him sensible that he is connected more or less with all around him, with Jew and Gentile, with the Church, and the world. That is, in short, now a member of the Church of Jesus, united with the whole family of God—linked with and interested in all the purposes of God, and deeply concerned both in all that relates to those purposes, and in all those who are involved with himself in their blessed issue. But, again, in the first instance, it is probable that some particular portion of truth has produced a remarkable effect upon his soul; it often happens that some passage of God's word stands out in the conviction of the sinner's conscience, and makes

more than an ordinary impression upon him, and when that is the case, he is more peculiarly drawn to the consideration of the truth contained in it. He is taken up with it, and is so interested in it, that for a season no other portion appears to his mind of equal value and importance.

But will he stop here? No. If rightly instructed in the Word of God, he will leave the first principles of the Gospel of Christ and go on unto perfection. He will not stop at any particular truth as if it were the whole truth, but he will go on to take in and receive, by the teaching of the blessed Spirit, all the fulness of God's revelation in its rich and large generality; and he will look at all its details, because he knows that *all Scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. And, therefore, instead of being the reader of a few chapters in the Bible, instead of confining his attention to a portion only of the Word of God, while all the rest is laid aside, he takes up the whole volume, he searches and prays over it from one end to the other; he seeks the application of God's Spirit on every portion of it, and searches for the lessons to be learned out of every part of it.

Now, in respect to both these points which

we have thus touched on, we consider that the Christian Church, of late, has taken a standing very far below that which it ought to have. For instance, with respect to the first point, we believe that the spiritual welfare and salvation of the individual soul has been, not too earnestly, for that would be impossible, but too *exclusively* the object of the Christian. We believe that the children of God have said, I have my own soul to attend to, this is the great end I have in view, and so long as that is done, I am satisfied; forgetting, altogether, that they are members of a family, and failing, therefore, in a great measure, to *identify* themselves with all the Church of the redeemed, even with the whole of the body of the Lord Jesus. While, as regards the other point we have noticed, Christians have also come short, for they have laid hold of particular truths, and singled out particular doctrines,—fundamental they may have been, but still a portion only of God's truth,—and have thus left out of sight all that length and breadth of truth which is open to us in God's Word. They have just taken up a portion here and a portion there, which they have considered might be profitable for their own instruction, forgetting that it is their bounden duty to study and embrace the whole. But, my dear brethren, we thank God

that there is a great improvement going on in these points;—the Church is awakening to her privileges. And the result is, That the ancient people of God, in all their interest, in all the promises that belong to them, in all the part which they hold in the Word of God, *that prominent part which they have there*, are becoming now an object of deep and affectionate concern to the Church of Christ. Christians are learning now that they do not stand alone, and that they must not and cannot act on the principle of separate and individual interest, but that they are connected with the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in all its coming fulness, and must therefore feel interested in the people who are so essentially concerned in that glory.

As regards, too, the other point, the eyes of the Christian Church are opened. We find many more Christians who no longer read the prophecies under the impression that they are not to be understood, except through the intervention of a spiritualizing alchemy, and that without this, these Scriptures cannot afford any nourishment to the child of God; but we see them recurring to the Old Testament in all its plainness, marking its historical facts and statements, looking at its clear types, observing its faithful and precious promises and prophecies, and taking it up in its plain, simple,

and historical meaning, and grammatical sense, and not wresting it and turning it this way or that, just to serve a spiritual turn, or to afford a little comfort to the individual believer. Not that he now loses the comfort from such portions of God's word, but he enjoys it with infinitely greater propriety and preciousness, when he takes the literal as well as the spiritual sense, and when he acknowledges and recognises the plain and grammatical sense of the record. And, my dear brethren, the subject that we have before us to-night is an instance of this. Many persons—all of you, I suppose—are conversant with the history of David, and all of you who have read that history, have felt that it is full of the deepest interest, and of the richest instruction to the child of God, *apart from every other consideration*. But was it meant to be read *apart from every other consideration*? Is the history of David nothing more than the history of a child of God in all the variety of experience? And are we to read his history, and gather from it what we can, as we read the history of any other man? Nay, my dear brethren, David is a link in a mighty chain that we are called distinctly to recognise. It hangs down from Adam, through Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and is then continued in the tribe of Judah.

And see what hangs upon this chain; nothing less than all the glory of the coming dispensation, the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the regeneration of the world we stand upon; all this is connected with David, as a link in the chain of God's wonderful arrangement. Besides, therefore, contemplating his character as that of an isolated individual, who has passed over a stage to leave some important lessons for imitation and warning, we see him, indissolubly connected with the glory of God, the happiness of man, and the deliverance of creation, because the coming glory of the Son of David hangs upon the fact that Jesus, as holding the throne of David for ever, cannot fulfil his high office, or be brought to his kingdom, except through the son of Jesse, and as the fruit of his body.

May God the Holy Spirit be abundantly shed upon us this night, while I endeavour, through his grace, to lead you to a consideration of the subject which has been proposed for our meditation. My desire is, to place before you a simple exposition of Scripture—to gather out those passages which bear upon the several parts of our subject, and thus bring before you the testimony of the Word of God, with respect to his covenant with David.

I. Look at the statement respecting God's covenant with David in the chapter from which

my text is taken. David having the intention to build the Lord a house, Nathan said, Do all that is in thine heart; but that night the word of the Lord came, to Nathan, and He sent him with a message to David,—“Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel; and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, and as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, that thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will

chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David." The same covenant occurs in 1 Chron. xvii. 7—15, in nearly the same words.

Now, the question is simply this. Has this covenant to David been fulfilled in Solomon, or does it yet remain to be fulfilled? In reply to this question we may observe, first, that the promise being made to David's son, does not necessarily imply, that it was made to Solomon, because, the Jews called any descendant a son. Our Lord is called the seed of Abraham, as Paul teaches us. He is specified individually as such, though he did not come till many generations after Abraham. So our Lord was called David's son continually by the Jews themselves; and the Messiah is expected by them simply as David's son. In the passage in Chronicles, greater latitude of expression is employed: "And it shall come to pass, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be *of thy sons*."*

* 1 Chron. xvii. 11.

David himself did not understand the promise to apply merely to Solomon. For we find in the passage which follows this, David was very much struck with the condescension of the Lord, saying, "Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?"* There is very little doubt that the latter part is not correctly translated. In Samuel, the passage may be translated, "And this is the form (or law) of the man (or Adam) [who is] the Lord God." And in Chronicles, "And thou hast regarded me according to or after the form of the man, the highest (who is), the Lord God." Or if we consider it better to take the words Lord God in the vocative, as they occur more than once in the context, it would be "This is the law of the Adam, O Lord God." David, even in the latter translation, *expressly referring* by the Holy Ghost to God having promised in this covenant that Redeemer who should stand as the woman's seed for the recovery of a ruined world.

But, not to press this interpretation of the passage it, is very clear, that David is looking a

* 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19.

long way beyond Solomon, for he is constantly speaking of his throne being established for ever, &c. So that he certainly did not understand the blessing of his son to be confined merely to Solomon; he looked upon it as extending infinitely beyond him. Look, then, at one or two more passages. In Ps. lxxxix. 2, 3, we have these words: "Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." Then, again, verses 19—37, we have as follows: "I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also will I make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.

My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven."

Now here is almost a repetition of the words of the covenant, but the promises are not to Solomon, but to a person of the name of David, who, it is evident, must be a son of the first David. And, is not this the David of the prophets, the Messiah, whom God will set over his people?

In 2 Samuel xxiii. 5, we find David once more speaking of this covenant as ordered in all things and sure, and he calls it the *everlasting* covenant, which was all his salvation and all his desire. In Ps. cxxxii. 11, we find the covenant brought

forward again: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." There can be no question with us, after the comment of the Holy Ghost on this passage, that the Messiah, and not Solomon, is the person here referred to, of whom it was said to David, "I will set him *on thy throne*;" while in the verses which follow (17, 18), he says, "There, *i. e.* in Zion, will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish." He evidently implies the budding or germinating of the horn of David—after, that is to say, it had been drooping and almost withered; and specifies the Lord's anointed (*Heb.* Messiah) as the person in whom the glory should be revived, and perpetuated, and on whom the crown should flourish. Psalm lxxii., gives us a very extended comment on the glory of the kingdom of the Son of David. The language of the Psalmist is completely beyond anything that will apply to the literal Solomon, and evidently refers to the Messiah.

Let me now make a few remarks upon these passages, as a whole. First, it seems clear that they cannot be confined to Solomon; and, secondly, that they must be accomplished *fully* in the

Messiah. So far there is little or no difference of opinion. But here the question arises, "Will the fulfilment of all this in the Messiah be literal or figurative?" We therefore, remark, thirdly, that the *house of David* is essentially involved in the keeping of this covenant on the part of God; for, if this covenant be fulfilled in any way, irrespective of the house of David, it is not properly fulfilled. It is a covenant broken. No spiritual child will answer to the plain words here uttered. He must be the literal son of David—of the house of David. Fourthly, we gather, also, from these passages, that he is to occupy the throne of David. This enters into the very essence of the covenant. Nay, it is in reparation for this that he must be of the family of David. I pray you to mark this. The covenant is not that David shall never want a son; this would have been fulfilled the moment the Messiah was born of his seed. But the covenant is, that David shall never want a son *to sit on his throne; i. e.,* in the language of scripture, "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." If now, *thy body*, means thy body literally, and the Messiah must be of the house and lineage of David, then *thy throne* must mean thy throne literally, and the Messiah must succeed to David in his kingdom on Mount Zion and at Jerusalem. Nay, the former was

only necessary for the attaining of the latter. *To suffer in our flesh* he might have been of any other family; but to fulfil the covenant with David, he must sit upon David's throne, and to sit upon David's throne, he must be of David's house and lineage. You may if you will spiritualize the throne of David, but in that case you must spiritualize his body also; if the latter is literal, then the former *must* be literal also. Fifthly, again, this holding of David's throne by David's son is proved to be literal by its being identified in the covenant with the permanent glory of the Jewish people. I refer you to 2 Sam. vii. 10, 11: "There I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house." Now, this is evidently not yet fulfilled. God has never put his people Israel where they are afflicted no more. They are at this very time in a state of persecution; they are now outcast, they are under the displeasure of God, they are moving from one place to another; but here we are led to look forward to the peaceful kingdom of the literal Son of David over the literal people of Judah and of Israel.

Thus far we have confined ourselves chiefly to

words spoken by David or Solomon. We now proceed to trace this covenant to its accomplishment.

II. I observe, that though Solomon did not fulfil the covenant which God had given to his father, yet both were striking types and earnest of the great fulfilment that was to be accomplished in the Messiah. Saul was appointed king, answering to the kings of this world, to whom God has intrusted the dominion, but, like Saul, the kings of this world will reject the Lord and cast him off, and this dispensation will be wound up, as we believe, in their entire and complete opposition to the Lord and his Christ. We believe "That the kings of the earth will set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed; saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Saul having rejected the Lord, David was privately anointed king by Samuel, and afterwards publicly installed into the kingdom; just so our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom David is in this respect the type, has appeared as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: there was the hiding of his power; and he has been gathering his Church together one by one ever since, waiting till he shall be manifested as the king in the day of his glory. David, again, as the type,

accomplished the subduing of his enemies, and was a man of war, (which God told him was the reason why he should not build the temple), so, our Lord at his second coming, will, as the great Antitype, take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of his Son; when their blood shall be sprinkled on his garments, and he will stain all his raiment. But God would not allow that the fulness of the type should be comprised in David; and therefore Solomon here comes in to complete it, by typifying the love and glory which should result from the previous victory of Jesus. And in his millennial glory, when he is exalted on the throne of righteousness and peace, our Lord is the antitype of Solomon, the man of peace, who succeeds to the victories of David, and rules over his kingdom in peace and righteousness. Thus, in Saul, and David, and Solomon, we have a complete type and earnest of the position that our Lord will hold at his second coming, when the kings of the earth being subdued and cast out from their dominion, Christ having overcome all his enemies, shall rule in peace and righteousness for ever.

Again, we may look at David and Solomon in another light, as remarkable earnest and types of that which is to come. David prepared the materials for the building of the temple, but Solomon

erected that edifice; our Lord is at this time, and has been throughout this dispensation, in his Davidical character, collecting the materials of his spiritual temple, and hewing one stone after another through his Word and ministers, for the building of that house, which shall be made up of living stones built upon himself, the one great foundation. When he comes the second time he will present that Church to himself, in all its perfect beauty—every stone having been hewn and fashioned by the Spirit, and the whole prepared for an everlasting habitation and temple of God, that he may be eternally glorified. Again, we remark, that the reign of Solomon was one of extraordinary glory. In this respect, it is peculiarly the earnest and type of our Lord's coming kingdom. In 1 Kings x. 14, you find a description of all the wealth and glory of Solomon; the world seemed laid under contributions to that king; he had his gold, his silver, his ivory, his apes and peacocks; all that could add to his glory was poured into his treasures, so that the wealth of the world seemed laid at his feet. What was this, but the type and earnest of the time when all creation shall be again redeemed, and all that God has made shall be brought back to the rightful dominion, and become subservient to the glory of our exalted king. Yea, the Spirit speaks in this way con-

tinually. See what you find in Isaiah lx. about the gold, and silver, and camels, and all those things that are to be brought in that day, as an offering unto the king. St. Paul tells us, that all creation groans and travails in pain together until now, but that it shall be brought from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And we believe that the day is coming when there shall be holiness unto the Lord on the bells of the horses, yea, every pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts, and there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.* There will be the fullest accomplishment of that of which Solomon's kingdom was the peculiar type. Solomon, indeed, reigned over the Jewish people in peace, and the glory of the world was given unto him, that he might have the hearts of a willing and obedient people, and the glory externally of a splendid kingdom; but to our Lord there shall be the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, for the subjects of his kingdom shall be a holy people, corresponding in their inward purity and peace to the beautiful creation around them. Nor, my dear brethren, should we omit to remark, with respect to the fact of the queen of Sheba coming to

* Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

Solomon, that there is another type and earnest given to us herein. She came to hear the wisdom of Solomon from the uttermost parts of the earth. So will the Gentiles also be gathered into the kingdom of Jesus. So will he reign to the uttermost parts of the earth. So shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

But I must now lead you to the other parts of our subject.

III. We come to the first apparent interruption to the fulfilment of this great covenant, and we find in Solomon a parallel to Adam. The latter exhibited a partial *type* of the second Adam; and so Solomon was a type, but a partial type of the king which was to come. He, like his first forefather, was a poor helpless creature, and the consequence was, that before he died he went back from the Lord. God had told both David and Solomon what he would do if the latter should forsake him. Solomon did forsake the Lord in his latter days, and God declared his sin should be visited, and as the sin was not merely personal, but specially respected his standing as the Lord's anointed, so, the punishment was to be marked by God's interference with the fulfilment of the covenant. This, however, for David's sake, did not happen in the days of Solomon, but in the

days of Rehoboam. The ten tribes were then separated from the two tribes, and thus there became two distinct kingdoms, the house of David only reigning over Judah and Benjamin. This was the first apparent interruption to the accomplishment of the covenant with David, because David's throne, which was promised to his son, was to be over the twelve tribes, and not only over two; the moment, therefore, the ten tribes were broken off, it became impossible that the covenant to David should be fulfilled, inasmuch as no succeeding king could, according to the covenant, be said to occupy David's throne who had not for his kingdom, as David had, all the tribes of Israel and Judah. At the same time God left an *earnest* of the fulfilment of the covenant by a succession of kings of the line of David reigning in Jerusalem, till the first captivity. But the iniquity of Israel increased, and having been led away captive, Judah also was led into captivity, and the family of David ceased to reign. *Now* there appeared to be a total interruption to the accomplishment of the promises and covenant of God. But two things still showed it was not forgotten. The first was, that the genealogies were still continued. This is an extraordinary fact. They are not retained at the present day, no Jew can now trace his genealogy. What, then, led at that time to their

preservation but this—that the Messiah was to be of the seed of David, and it was the will of God there should be such proof of this, as that none could resist it. The second evidence that the covenant of God was not forgotten is, that from time to time the harp of prophecy re-echoed what seemed to be the dying notes of that everlasting covenant. The announcements of the prophets dwell upon it, still testifying that not one jot or tittle of the covenant had gone by, though all seemed so dark, and desolate, and hopeless, and while yet there was no king upon David's throne, and the ten tribes were gone, and the two tribes in their condition of captivity. For instance, in Isaiah ix. 6, 7, we find the following passage: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Now what is this but a restatement of the covenant with David under circumstances of the greatest discouragement, with

an express declaration, that notwithstanding, the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall yet perform it? Again, in Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, we read: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." Here, again, the very same things are spoken of, and just as distinctly, with this striking peculiarity, that all the twelve tribes are again mentioned as incorporated into one kingdom, so that we have here Christ on the throne of David as it existed primarily; that is, the fulfilment of the original covenant is still insisted on. He shall take the throne of David, therefore Israel as well as Judah must be the subjects of his kingdom. In Jer. xxx. 4. 8, 9, Judah and Israel, that is, all the twelve tribes, are again spoken of as being under David their king. In Ezekiel xxxvii. there is a prophecy of the restoration of the ten tribes as well as of the two, and of their becoming one stick in the Lord's hand. And then, verse 24, after speaking of the ten tribes being recovered, which makes the kingdom of David complete, we read, "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all

shall have one shepherd: . . . and my servant David shall be their prince for ever." I might quote several other prophecies to the same effect, but time would fail me. Let me commend to your earnest and prayerful consideration the following passages: Jer. xxxiii., the whole of it; xxx. 1—9; Hosea iii.; Zech. xii. 6, to the end; xiii. 1; Amos ix. 11, to the end.* The fact is, that throughout the Old Testament all is consistent as regards this covenant with David to the very end. There was no exaggeration in its original announcement, but we find throughout the prophets (notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary during the dispersion and captivity) the tone of prophecy still sounding in the same unvarying strain, and the Spirit of God uniformly testifying, that the kingdom of David shall yet be under the son of David, and that, as his father had it, so shall

* The last passage has been subjected to the grossest perversion by modern interpreters, who have actually made out that the Apostle James explains the building again of the tabernacle of David, as referring to the calling of the Gentiles; whereas he states, agreeably to the sense of the prophet, that the entire conversion of the Gentile world will be the result of the Lord's again receiving and blessing the Jews. His object in quoting the prophecy was evidently not in the least to point out its fulfilment at the time he was speaking, but simply to show that the conversion of the Gentiles was the purpose of God.

his Son, even the Messiah, possess it in all the literal fulness pronounced in the original covenant.

We are now arrived, my dear brethren, at the end of the Old Testament witness to this great truth; and it remains for me, therefore, now as briefly as I may be able, to lead you

IV. To the testimony of the New Testament on this important subject, and the interesting question naturally arises here, Does Christianity at once throw a cloud over all this? Does the New Testament tell us, that it might be very well for the Jew to expect this, but that now all that is done with, and that as for any covenant with David, we have nothing more to do with it; we are now to begin to spiritualize, and as for any thing literal, it is to be discarded? Does it, in short, *crush* the hope of the literal fulfilment of the covenant with David, which must, to a Jew, at all events, *appear* to pervade his Scriptures; and, instead of dying away, to become more substantial as the volume draws to its close? Oh no! It enlarges, and enforces, and confirms, the very covenant we have been considering; and oh! what an unworthy stigma have Christians cast upon the New Testament, when they have gone to the Jew and said, All this is spiritual. The New Testament has no communion whatever with any such statements. It is just as uncom-

promising as the Old in its positive declaration, that the Son of David shall for ever possess the throne of David. Let us look at its statements. First, observe, it tells us the accomplishment of the fact of the Messiah being the Son of David with the greatest possible particularity. It gives us no less than two genealogies, for the very purpose of proving that this is the case; and at the same time it informs us, in what may be called an incidental manner, that it was because this was the case that Joseph went up to Bethlehem to be taxed, namely, because he was of the house and lineage of David, and thus was fulfilled the prophecy that our Lord should be born in Bethlehem Ephratah.

But further than this, it tells us plainly that the object of his being so born was not merely to fulfil the prophecy that he should be the Son of David; and yet this is all that many persons suppose to be meant. But what saith the Scripture on this head? An angel is sent to Mary before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ; and what is his announcement at that moment to the Virgin mother? Why, he takes up literally the testimony of the whole of the Old Testament, and says, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign

over the house of Jacob for ever : and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”*

Now this is a *New Testament* announcement. It is not an *Old Testament* prophecy, which may be thought typical, and mystical, and figurative, but it is a *New Testament* prophecy, which an angel was sent on purpose to deliver ; and its object was to show, that his being the Son of David was the stepping-stone to his taking the throne of David ; that he was of the seed of David as a provision, for the very end that he might be the rightful successor of David, and have a lawful and unquestionable claim to David’s kingdom. This is evidently the meaning of this verse, and this idea is no where lost. Look the *New Testament* carefully through, and you will find how the case stands.

Zacharias in his hymn says, “He hath raised up an horn of salvation in the house of his servant David ; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began : that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us ; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies

* Luke i. 32, 33.

might serve him without fear." He connects Christ being of the house of David with that deliverance by which he redeems them from all fear, and with the most perfect justness of expectation anticipates from this circumstance not the *spiritual* only, but also the *temporal* salvation of Israel. Then, again, how during our Lord's ministry was he addressed by those who came to him for relief and healing? "O Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on us." This was continually on their lips. When he was welcomed on his entrance into Jerusalem as a king, what was the acclamation with which they greeted him? "Hosanna to the Son of David!" And just before his ascension we find that the apostles looked to him to restore the kingdom to Israel, because they saw in Him the Son of David.

But here it may perhaps be said, that they were still at this time in a carnal condition, ignorant and dark, and not knowing what they were saying: that they had not yet attained to spiritual views, because the Holy Ghost was not yet given. Let us turn then to the Acts of the Apostles, and hear Peter speaking with power after that, by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, he was guided into *all* truth. I quote the whole passage. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the

patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."* Here, then, by the mouth of Peter, on the very first manifestation of his miraculous gifts—on the very day of Pentecost, the day of all others when, according to modern views, we might have expected that the spiritualizing system of interpretation would have been not merely sanctioned but established—the Holy Ghost sets his solemn seal to these remarkable points:—

Firstly, That God always intended that Christ should be *literally* of the fruit of David's loins according to the flesh.

Secondly, That God always intended that *this* same Christ should literally sit upon *his* (that is, *David's*) throne; for the word "his" in the text does not refer to Christ.

Thirdly, That as Christ was to die, this could

* Acts ii. 29—32.

only be accomplished by his resurrection, and that David accordingly as a prophet foretold this, as preparatory and instrumental to the other.

To make any further remark on this passage seems superfluous; if persons will spiritualize one part, let them spiritualize the other; if they *must* take one part literally, let them be consistent and take the whole in the same manner.

It would be endless to go through all the passages which establish this point; but if you will take your Concordance, and look under the head of "David," you will find how often he is named in Scripture in connexion with the glory of Messiah as his seed. I will only refer to one more, because the connexion is exceedingly beautiful: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying; For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." * Now what are we to suppose was in the apostle's mind here? Why, all that we have been considering. Now the apostle inserts here somewhat singularly the words

* 2 Tim. ii. 8, and following verses.

“of the seed of David.” What is their force in this connexion? That he was thus the rightful heir to the throne of his father David. And what was necessary that he might take this throne? That he should be raised from the dead, and thus be ready to reign over the house of Jacob for ever. And what is connected with that? That as the Father hath appointed unto him a kingdom, so his people should be sharers in it; and therefore the apostle writes, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him,” evidently referring to the throne of David, on which he shall reign at his appearing. And, my dear brethren, as if the same note should be prolonged to the very end, in what character does our Lord address one of the Churches in the book of Revelation: “He that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.” And in the very last chapter of the same book, he sets his seal to the importance of the same fact, saying, “I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” And now, my dear brethren, having glanced at the New Testament evidence on this head, let me ask you, how stands the covenant? Is it gone? Is it frittered away? Is it all become spiritual? Is David lost sight of, and the throne of David, and the house of David, in any literal meaning, scattered to the winds? No; the

covenant stands in all its unchangeableness to the last chapter of the book of God; and we find Christ still glorying in that title which shall belong to him for ever, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

But I must hasten to close the subject, by briefly noticing the fulfilment of all this. Observe, then,—

1. He will be revealed from heaven personally. Christ, though really and truly a king, has never been visibly manifested as such up to the present time. We do not yet see all things put under him; he is not the king manifest yet in his glory. But he will be so. He will come personally, and must come personally, to verify the covenant, as David's son, or he will not, he cannot, sit upon the throne of David as the seed of David. And, accordingly, in Zech. xiv. we have the prophecy of Christ's distinct revelation in person, his feet standing upon the Mount of Olives, and just as he was seen to go up into heaven, so in like manner he shall come again. The prophet Zechariah and the angel from heaven both give us the very same information; the one, declaring that "his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east;" and the other declaring, "This same Jesus

shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

2. He will reign on the throne of David. Mark how this will be accomplished in two particulars. It will be true *locally*, that our Lord will reign upon the throne of David. What does it say? Jer. iii. 17, "And at that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem." And again, Is. xxiv. 23: "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign upon Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." And again, Micah iv. 7, 8, which is a very striking passage, "And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Therefore Mount Zion is to be the place where the Lord Jesus shall reign, and Jerusalem is to be the throne of the Lord. It will also be David's throne, as regards the *subjects* of his kingdom. I have shown you that all the twelve tribes will be under him; so he will

have the kingdom of David in its fullest extent: not merely the two tribes, but all the twelve.

3. As Solomon built the temple, so shall the temple be built again, as it is written in the last chapters of the prophet Ezekiel. Again, as all the world brought its contributions to Solomon, so shall all the glory of the earth be brought to our Lord. The fulness of creation shall be his in the new heavens and the new earth.

And lastly, as all the Gentiles came to Solomon, so all kingdoms shall serve him; all kings shall fall down before him. "He shall have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Thus shall he, as the Son of David, occupy literally the throne of David in Jerusalem. He shall reign in Mount Zion for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

I have been obliged to pass hastily over several parts of the subject, because time forbade me to enlarge; and I will now, therefore, only make one or two very brief remarks, by way of applying the whole. I would say, then, this is the key which unlocks every part of the subject, viz., If Jesus *must be* the *literal* Son of David, then all in this connexion must be literal too: we can admit no arbitrary distinction. And it is vain to argue with the Jew upon any other principles: nay, it is most culpably casting a stumbling-block in his way. We

admit that all that has happened to them has been literal. We insist on the literal accomplishment of Jesus being the Son of David. Then away completely with the system of making everything else spiritual, and interpreting the throne of David as some indescribable thing in heaven. David never had a throne in heaven, and there is not the slightest ground, save man's arbitrary fancy, for such an interpretation. Again; as the resurrection of Christ was spoken of and looked forward to by David, in order that he might sit upon the throne of David, so should his second coming be looked forward to by us as preparatory to, and necessary for, the accomplishment of all these glorious promises. Oh! my dear brethren, how ought our hearts to look forward to this! How ought they to breathe the most fervent desires after the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, seeing that till he come in the flesh, as the Son of David, the throne of David will want its king, and the kingdom of David its Lord! Surely, it is for us to see, that the second coming of Jesus is wanting to complete the covenant, and until this be accomplished, David's covenant is suspended still, it cannot be carried out in its truth and reality. Again; how should the pleading of the Psalmist, after he has been stating the covenant of God with David, suit our feelings at this

time. He goes on to say, Ps. lxxxix. 38, and following verses, "But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. . . . How long, Lord? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire? . . . Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?" The Psalmist is drawing the contrast between the covenant that had been given, and the actual condition of things. It is for us to go to the Lord and plead with him, and say, "Lord, here is thy covenant, here is thy unchangeable mercy, here is thy faithfulness to David for ever, and yet look at thy people, see how they are cast out; see how their throne is lost; see how their crown is upon the ground; see how they are dispersed and scattered! Oh! Lord, arise and have mercy upon Zion. Let the times of peace come, yea, have mercy upon her—pity and comfort Jerusalem!" Oh! surely, we ought to put God in mind of all his covenant. So the Psalmist did. So surely *we* ought to plead with him, and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. And then, my brethren, how ought we to go to the Jew and say,

We admit all your Old Testament prophecies—we recognise Christ as the son of David after the flesh—and as he was born literally as the Son of David, so we believe that he will occupy literally the throne of David. We can go all this length with you; therefore come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel. We hold you out a crucified Saviour; we show you the true Lamb that has been sacrificed, of which yours was but the type, and we show you that blood that cleanseth from all sin. Come, and look at it. Come, and believe it. Come, and be saved by it. Do not think that for one moment we rob you of the coming glory of your Messiah; we cannot indeed give up his *cross*, but now we look for the crowning and glory of him who was crucified. And, my dear brethren, let me say to each of you, how should you all seek a personal interest in this hope? Oh! it is at the resurrection of the just, it is when the Lord's people shall come with him in glory, it is when we shall be raised to be kings and priests unto God, that all this glory will be accomplished. And, is it nothing to you and me, whether we shall have part in that glory? Is it nothing to you and me, whether we are sanctified by God the Father, and justified through Christ Jesus, and called? Shall we

consider these things as mere matters of idle speculation? Shall we look at this question as one of mere curiosity? Shall we turn over our Bibles, and see the harmony of prophets and evangelists, of types and antitypes, and shall we merely be pleased with the beauty of the scheme, and admire the purpose of our God, and shall we forget our own individual need of that meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, without which no man shall see the Lord? Oh! my dear brethren, I had not stood before God in this pulpit to-night, and before you, if it had not been from the solemn and deep conviction that these truths have the most practical bearing. I know the power of these things upon the heart of the Christian who lives in them and who lives upon them, having them applied to his soul by the mighty working of the Spirit. And so far from their being cold, inoperative, speculative truths, leading people astray, if you will only study them in simplicity, looking for the grace of God, and waiting upon him for his teaching, there is no motive so constraining as this blessed hope to kindle in you all diligence and stir you up to all holiness;—nothing that will so much tend to keep you standing with your loins girt about and your lamps burning.

Therefore, my prayer to God this night is, that

by means of these Lectures you may not gain information merely, though *that* is absolutely necessary for your soul's health (for knowledge and grace must always go together); but that the Holy Spirit, who hath indited these blessed promises, may sanctify you by all the truth preached to you on these occasions, and thus make you meet for the heavenly inheritance; that you may be presented together with us and all his saints at that glorious appearing, when Jesus shall take the throne of David, and come to be fully and for ever a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.

LECTURE V.

THE FIRST RESTORATION FROM BABYLON.

BY THE REV. W. W. PYM,
RECTOR OF WILLIAN, HERTS.

JEREMIAH XXIII. 5—8.

“ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all

countries whither I had driven them ; and they shall dwell in their own land."

THIS passage of Holy Writ, is one justly valued by those who are interested in the destinies of Israel. It clearly refers to the Divine purposes concerning the seed of Abraham, and will, therefore, form a befitting ground-work for the following meditations.

The subject, which is to be brought before you this evening, is,

The first restoration from Babylon ; and the following question has been raised upon it:—Whether the predicted restoration of Israel from his dispersions was fulfilled by that event ?

The simplest method of discussing the subject will be,

To consider some chief features of the predicted restoration of Israel : from which it will appear, as we proceed, Whether the deliverance from Babylon answers to them.

I. The first feature described by the prophets, to which I would direct your minds is,

That the children of the dispersion shall be gathered from the four quarters of the globe.

In almost every part of the world with which we are acquainted, we meet with some of the scattered seed of Abraham ; and, though they be

removed from each other far as the east is from the west, their gathering together is sure and certain. Of this I conceive, *in one sense*, the dying patriarch spoke when he said, "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be," that is, as members to a head. But of this gathering the Prophet Isaiah predicts: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west: I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth."* At the time, therefore, of which the prophet speaks, they shall come from the north, and the south, from the east, and the west; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The Prophet Jeremiah confirms the voice of Isaiah, and in that text which has been read you find it, where he says, "But the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries, whither I had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land."

Such, then, will be the extent of the gathering

* Isaiah xliii. 1. 5, 6.

of which we treat, commensurate only with their previous scattering; so that, wheresoever they are found on the face of the whole earth, thence assuredly they shall come up, and return to their own land.

We now ask, Whence did they come after the captivity in Babylon? The people of the kingdom of Israel, or the ten tribes, were carried away captive by Salmaneser, king of Assyria, about 115 years before Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar; and as, upon the subject of their return, there exists a divided opinion, *for argument's sake* I will suppose, that they did come back with the kingdom of the house of David, after the seventy years' captivity. Whence then did they come? We look to the south, and look in vain; for we discover no company returning from that quarter. We turn to the west, and turn to no purpose; for thence we see none of Abraham's seed hastening homeward. And, if we look to the east, we shall meet with the same result. From the north and the north-east only did they come back at the restoration of which we speak; and that, by allowing the greatest possible latitude to our speculation, by supposing that to be true, *which we can by no means allow to be so*, namely, that the kingdom of Israel returned with the dispersed of Judah.

In this first feature, then, of the restoration of the seed of Abraham, as spoken by the prophets, we find scarcely any correspondence at all.

II. To the Prophet Ezekiel, who was a prophet of the captivity, it pleased God to reveal much of his future purposes concerning his people. From him we know, that, at the time when he shall visit them in mercy, *there shall be a new division of the land by lot, and a building of the temple according to a Divine revelation.*

It may here be objected, that, we adduce a very difficult and much questioned part of Holy Writ, upon which to found our expectation. It is sufficient for us, if we are satisfied that this portion of the prophecies of Ezekiel is a part of God's Word; for, if it be so, then not one jot or tittle shall pass till all be fulfilled. But we will shortly examine this testimony. After the prophet had been taught respecting the restoration of the latter day, and the reunion of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah under Christ, he sees in vision, and is informed concerning what he sees, many things respecting the dividing of the land, the building of the temple, and the ordinances of Divine worship. In chapter xlv. 1, it is thus written, "Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the Lord, an holy

portion of the land." Here a time is predicted when the land which God gave to Abraham shall be divided by lot for an inheritance. Examine the force of this language. It is spoken of as a thing then future, but as a thing which shall certainly take place in its appointed season. We ask, whether this division of the land, here described, has been made since the days of Ezekiel? Did it occur on the return from Babylon? It did not; but it is to occur when that restoration, of which Ezekiel speaks, shall take place; and that is the restoration of the latter day.

The other part of this second particular in which we are seeking a resemblance, is *the building a temple according to a Divine revelation*.

On both occasions, of the building of the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, and of the temple in the days of Solomon, Jehovah manifested a special jealousy respecting them. "See, saith he, to Moses, thou make all things according to the pattern I showed thee in the mount."* Again, when David gave in charge to Solomon his son, respecting the building of the temple on Mount Sion, he gave him a pattern after which the work was to be con-

* Heb. viii. 5.

structed; and this had been given him by Jehovah. "All this, saith David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern."* That there was a special cause for this jealousy, we can readily understand, when we reflect that there is hardly any part of that dispensation, and of the ordinances connected with it, which in some way or degree did not point to Christ. If, therefore, we find a Divine revelation afforded, which refers to the yet future building of the temple, we do not marvel. When the people returned from Babylon, true it is, the city was rebuilt upon her own heap. As true, that the temple rose again from its ruins; but the question for us to decide is, Whether the temple at that time rebuilt coincided with that which is here described. An examination into the particulars revealed to the prophet, and of the history of that transaction of which we speak will, I trust, satisfy us all, that the building which then was reared did not agree with the instructions given to Ezekiel.†

III. *The restoration of the Ten Tribes, and the reunion of the kingdoms under Christ, never again to be divided*, forms another important feature in the restoration revealed by the prophets.

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 19. See also ver. 12.

† See Ezek. xl., xli., xlii.

That there was a mystery involved in the rending of the kingdom of Israel from the house of David, may be gathered from one remarkable passage in the history of that event. I refer to 1 Kings xii. 19—24.

Here it is especially declared by Jehovah: "This thing is from me." I know full well, that the *apparent* cause of this appointment was the sin of Solomon, with whom "the Lord was angry, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice."* I know, also, that the truth of Jehovah was involved in this thing, after he had pronounced judgment upon that sin, "for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat."† But in this case, as in many which might be adduced, one ostensible reason is given for the conduct of Jehovah, other reasons more remote, and more important also, being left for future development. What then was the mystery in this present instance? The days of Solomon may be truly called "the palmy days of Israel;" and as David in the Psalms, and Moses in the Law, had foretold the future glories of that people under Christ, and as all the Divine dealings with them tend

* 1 Kings xi. 9.

† 1 Kings xii. 15.

to promote this ultimate object, *the glory of Christ as the king of the Jews*, the national prosperity was sufficient to turn away the heart of the people from any other expectation; and to make them satisfied with the existing state of things. Now, whatever God does he does effectually, and, we find him acting by this rule in the present case. The kingdom which was at unity in itself, he rends in twain, and thus shakes the people from their carnal confidences. He thus teaches them, moreover, to look for “a kingdom which cannot be moved,” when “they shall be one nation (again) in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.”* This, I conceive to have been the *ultimate* object of this transaction.

Here the question arises, What has become of the kingdom of Israel? I am well aware, that upon this subject two opinions prevail: the one, That they came back with the house of David from Babylon: the other, That they have never returned even to this day. We will shortly consider each.

When we examine the details of the Babylonish restoration, we find the sum of the people, as

* Ezek. xxxvii. 22.

taken by Ezra and Nehemiah, to be 49,697; namely, of the people, 42,360, (Neh. vii. 66), and of servants, 7,337; for, though in the detailed accounts there is some difference between the two, in the sum total they agree.*

Now, though I can readily understand, that the people were "minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow," yet, that the two kingdoms were reduced to such a fraction as this, I cannot readily concede. We look to the days of David, when Jehovah, in order to pay off an arrear of punishment due to the nation, permitted David to yield to the suggestion of Satan, and to number the people; (compare 2 Sam. xxiv. 1; and 1 Chron. xxi. 1;) and in his days what do we find? That in Israel were 800,000 *men of war*, and in Judah were 500,000; making a total of *men of war* of 1,300,000. Here we have neither women, nor children, nor, I conclude, servants. Surely, then, we have a numerical argument against the doctrine, That the kingdom of Israel, or of the Ten Tribes, returned with the house of David after the captivity in Babylon. What then, it will be asked, has become of them? We know from their history, (2 Kings xvii. 22, 23,) that they were carried away captive by the King of Assyria above one hundred years before

* See Scott's Bible, Neh. vii. 5, 6, note.

the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. In the second book of Esdras we meet with a remarkable passage concerning them; and though, I am well aware, that it is an Apocryphal book, and, therefore, that its testimony upon any subject will be received with much hesitation, yet, it may be allowed a certain degree of weight on such a question as the present. What then is the amount of this information? That, fearing lest they should be betrayed into idolatry, they determined upon leaving the haunts of men, and journeyed for one year and a half from Assyria, in which country they had been placed. If there be any credit due to this, all we desire to take from it is the fact, that they did not continue in that country into which they had been carried away captive. An occurrence is upon record, which took place a few years since, the truth of which, I think, has never been gainsayed; and which is, without doubt, fresh in the minds of some. At the great annual fair, which is held at Leipsic, some of the seed of Abraham appeared, bringing with them their articles of merchandise; and when inquiry was made about them, it is reported, that their reply was to the following effect: "That Abraham was their father, that there were large numbers of them in the country where they dwelt, and that country was Bucharìa." This

I believe to have been the substance of the narrative. That there is something more than probability in the idea, that these are the lost tribes of Israel, I am ready to think, not only because the minds of men have been of late directed to that part of the world, which before had been little noticed ; but because the principal approach to Bucharica is from China. Thus when the time for favouring Zion appears to be arriving, and therefore for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, the doors of that vast empire, are being providentially opened ; and thus, if this be true, a way is preparing for the return of that people from their hiding place, where the Lord has shut them in. *

But it may be objected, If so, they have not been visited with judgment as their brethren during the time of their dispersions. Should what has here been argued prove correct, God will be justified herein. In this, as in all his works, he will be found righteous. For, let it not be forgotten, or overlooked, that if, as we believe, the kingdom of Israel never returned from their dispersion with the kingdom of Judah, they have been altogether exempt from that tremendous curse which was laid by the fathers upon the head of the children, when, about

* See Note A.

to crucify the Lord's anointed, they cried with one voice, "His blood be on us, and on our children."* And, if the Lord have hid them, of this we are persuaded, that, when the fulness of time for their restoration shall arrive, he will bring them forth; for "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock."

Their restoration then is clear, and the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel is so full upon the point, that we need only study it throughout to be satisfied of the fact, and that they shall be reunited unto Christ, never again to be divided.

We ask now the question which has before been put. Did these things occur after the return from Babylon? We are constrained to confess they did not; and if so, that there is no harmony or agreement between this feature of the restoration, spoken of by the prophets, and that which was then accomplished.

IV. I would direct attention now to another particular, I mean, *the coming of Elijah the Prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord.*

It is no uncommon occurrence, when this subject is brought forward, for men to say, "Oh, this is John the Baptist, and our Lord himself

* Matt. xxvii. 25.

tells us that it is ;” and in proof of it, Matt. xi. 14 is quoted, which testifies, “ This is Elias which was for to come.”

We will endeavour, concisely, to examine the question. In Mal. iv. 5, 6, it is written : “ Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Here we find the individual so clearly identified, that no other person can be intended but “ Elijah the Prophet;” and the coming of Elijah is connected with “ the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” But it is replied, “ Our Saviour, in the passage of St. Matthew’s Gospel already quoted, teaches that it is John the Baptist.” It happens in this case, as in others, that what is *shortly* stated in the xith Matt., is stated at length in the xviith; and no reasonable person will reject the light which God himself condescends to throw upon the shorter passage by the longer. We find instances of this in the history of man’s creation, in the first and second chapters of Genesis. In the first is a concise narrative of the fact: in the second, further particulars are added. So, in the case of the resurrection of the dead. That doctrine

is shortly laid down by Daniel and other holy men of God; but St. Paul reveals that event in detail, as also does St. John, and teaches, that there must be two acts of the resurrection, with a long interval between them. To Matt. xvii. let us now refer. There the three favoured disciples, on their return from the mount of transfiguration, put this question to the Lord, "Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."* Now, here are two specific assertions made in reply: the one "that Elias shall first come and restore all things:" the other, in another tense, speaking of a thing past, and asserting, that (in some way or other) "Elias was already come." Here, *according to the prevailing notion*, our Lord neutralizes his first assertion by his second: in other words, he says in one breath a thing which, in the next, he teaches to be untrue!

How then are these to be reconciled? Most easily. Was John Baptist Elijah the Prophet?

* Matt. xvii. 11—13.

Take the answer from his own lips. “And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not.”* How then were his Lord’s words to be understood? Let the announcing angel explain it who spake to Zacharias concerning John: “He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias.”† Thus, and thus only it was, that Elias was come already; and when you consider that John the Baptist was then dead, when our Lord asserted, “Elias truly *shall* first come and restore all things,” we have no alternative but to believe *all* that he said, and not to affix the stigma of falsehood to any portion of his word, who spake as never man spoke.

John Baptist had come already, according to the testimony of Gabriel, “in the spirit and power of Elias;” and truly Elias shall come according to the testimony of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Malachi confirmed by Christ, to do whatsoever God’s hand and his counsel determined before should be done. We may now look back to the prophet, and consider what he asserts respecting the object of his coming. “And he shall turn

* John i. 19—21.

† Luke i. 17.

the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." That John Baptist, *as the type*, performed this work *to a small extent*, we readily acknowledge, (Luke i. 17,) and, the amount of the typical act is easily ascertained, when we consider, that 500 brethren appear to be the greatest number of believers ever named before the day of Pentecost. (1 Cor. xv. 6.) But it will here be inquired, What are we to understand by turning the heart of the fathers to the children, and the children to their fathers? The key to this passage is, I think, found in the words of our Lord on one recorded occasion: "Think not," he says, "that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."* Whither will you turn to see this word fulfilled to the very letter? To the Jews. Where shall you look for the tremendous realizing of this awful sentence, but to them? Let but a Jew be convinced, through the mighty working of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, and have grace to confess him before men,

* Matt. x. 34—36.

and his foes are literally they of his own household. Let but the convert profess his faith, and the very authors of his being will seek the life which under God they gave. The very wife of his bosom will become his enemy, and the familiar friend whom he trusted, his deadliest foe. But, when the Lord shall send Elijah the Prophet before the dreadful day of which he speaks, his appointed work will be to turn the heart of the fathers to the children; and the children to their fathers: thus, preparing the way of the Lord, before he come to smite the earth with a curse. It may yet be urged that these are strange things, and therefore hard to be received. To this, there is but one reply, Is the Lord's arm shortened? "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If it be hard (margin) in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be hard in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts."* And let it be remembered that there is a peculiar fitness in the selection of this individual for the work, because he never died, wherefore, he need not be raised from the dead before the appointed season of the resurrection, to perform this office. If, therefore, from what has thus been argued from the Scripture, "Elijah the Prophet" must come before the day of the Lord, and, by

* Zech. viii. 6.

consequence, about the time of the national restoration, we ask, for a fourth time, the question so often reiterated: Did these things occur at the restoration from Babylon? To this but one reply can be given: They did not.

V. One other feature only shall be brought forward in connexion with our inquiry: *That the Egyptian deliverance shall prove to be only a type of the marvellous things which God will do for his people in that day.*

Here we must first establish the expectation, that signs and wonders shall attend the latter day deliverance. In the last chapter of the Prophet Micah, we find our warrant for this belief. Having spoken of the restoration of the people of God in the fourteenth verse, he adds, "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things." Here, the Egyptian deliverance is, in this particular, to be the example. The wonders which God's hand had wrought at that time, show before what he will do at the last, when he will gather his people from the nations whither he has driven them. The prophet then, winds up his testimony with these remarkable words, sealing the expectation with this assurance: "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our

fathers from the days of old." Why not *truth* to Abraham, and *mercy* to Jacob? The Spirit of Christ speaketh advisedly in the Word; and we may be sure there is a reason for this appropriation, as in all other cases. When Jehovah entered into covenant with Abraham, it was of his most free and undeserved *mercy* toward that individual. God called him alone, and justified him freely by his grace. He was bound by no promise to do this. It was the working of his own free will directed by his mercy. Not so with Jacob. The word had gone forth to Abraham for himself and his seed after him. When, therefore, the Lord transacted with Jacob, he stood, as it were, in another position. He was pledged to fulfil that mercy which he had revealed to Abraham. Hence, that which was *mercy* to Abraham, became *truth* to Jacob; and He, who magnifies his Word above all his name, will fulfil to the letter the mercy and the truth which comprise the future blessedness of Abraham's seed. Our expectation being found from this passage to be Scriptural, that signs and wonders shall mark the deliverance spoken of by the prophets, we must look to Jeremiah for the measure of this mighty working. And here we fall back upon our text: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The

Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt." Why not? Will the people have become ungrateful to the Lord for the honour put upon their fathers in the days of old, beyond all other nations? No. The prophet goes on to explain this: "But [they shall say], The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." The meaning is clear. The latter day deliverance shall so far exceed the former, that, by reason of the glory that excelleth, it shall not be remembered nor come into mind. Now, amidst that constellation of wonders which Jehovah wrought when he made bare his arm to bring his people out of the land of Egypt, and to bring them into their own land, which was the brightest, which shed the most glorious light upon them? We may consider the plagues of Egypt in their order, we may add the setting aside the very ordinances of nature, when the sea was loosed from the perpetual decree, by which it had been bound from the beginning, and formed a wall on the right hand and on the left for the ransomed to pass over. This we may do, and arrive at no conclusion. God had made bare his arm, and stamped upon them all the broad characters of

miraculous interference. But there remains one which claims the supremacy, and takes a native precedence of all, and that was, *the manifested presence of Christ in the fiery cloudy pillar*. And if, in a season of marvels, this was the greatest—if this, like Aaron's rod, swallowed up the rest—how shall the marvellous things of the latter day exceed in glory the glory of the former, if this overwhelming feature be not there? Surely, the glory of the latter shall drive away the very remembrance of the former, because in the latter their “eyes shall see the king in his beauty;” for then they shall look on him whom they pierced, “when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.”*

We ask, for the fifth and last time, What is there of a corresponding character in the return from Babylon? And all of us, I think, must join in one and the same reply, There is nothing.

What, therefore, is our conclusion respecting the Babylonish restoration?

That *the promises of the restoration of Israel were not accomplished in that return: that it was partial*, inasmuch as one kingdom only was brought back, and not the other: *that it was temporary*, after an appointed season to be suc-

* Luke ix. 26.

ceeded by a wide wasting desolation: (Luke xix. 43, 44:) *that it was a reviving in bondage, for the days did arrive in which the sceptre departed from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet, and Shiloh came.**

We have only now to inquire, *What is the present duty of the Church of Christ, in connexion with this doctrine?*

Her duty is clear, to promote God's purposes of mercy and of truth to Israel. And how may this be done? Here the Lord not only furnishes by precept his will concerning us, but gives his own example in confirmation of the precept. We will go to one deeply interesting period of his eventful history, in order to obtain what we seek. Observe him, not many hours before he entered into his unspeakable passion, when the Father was about to lay upon him the accumulated guilt of a world of sinners; when he was about to be baptized with that baptism of fire upon which his heart was so intent, that he said, "How am I straitened until it be accomplished!" See him ascend an eminence from which "he beheld the city," and what words do we hear from his gracious lips? "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace." Here is

* Gen. xlix. 10.

love: here is pity: here is compassion; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth spake. But draw nearer to that man of sorrows, and what do you see? You see the big tear rolling down his careworn cheek testifying to the grief which swelled his bosom; for those tears were shed for a people just about to fill up the measure of their iniquity by killing him, the Prince of Life. Proceed in this eventful history, and go with me to the consummation on Calvary: when the very face of nature was shrouded with a noon-day darkness, sad testimony to the state of his benighted soul, from which all sensible comfort was withdrawn, because it pleased the Father to put to grief the son of his love, and to make "him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." What gracious words proceeded out of his lips? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And, for the fruit of this intercessory prayer, we look to the day of Pentecost, when three thousand souls, of those who had been his betrayers and murderers, were added to the Church of such as should be saved!

He is still the Shepherd of Israel, and David knew the value of that title when he said, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Full of comfort is the assurance thus conveyed to the

heart of his sheep. In the season of weakness Christ is "the Sheep for the slaughter," or "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." But in his season of power he is "the Great Shepherd of the sheep," when, as touching his people Israel, "he will bear them and carry them as in the days of old."

Here, then, is the Church's duty exhibited in the brightest colours. Here she beholds her example, and it becomes her to go and do likewise. Would she feel as Christ felt, she must love Abraham's seed. Would she do as Christ did, she must labour for their good. She has enjoyed the children's bread, and been fattening upon it for ages, whilst the children of the kingdom have been left to starve. To you, then, whom I now address, the way of duty is clear. Make the claims of Israel plain to those who know them not, and press upon those who know them the duty of acting up to that knowledge.

Here the office of the preacher ceases. It is ours to proclaim the will of God as revealed in his Word. It is his to command the blessing. May that blessing be now largely given, that the ministration of this service may redound to the Divine glory, and the good of his people Israel, through Jesus Christ my Lord, my God!

NOTE A.

WHEN engaged in preaching the sermon, of which the foregoing is the substance, I stated that the place from which these Jews came was "the north of China." The error arose from the following circumstance, that I had not read the statement since its first appearance in the year 1838, and quoted what was then stated from memory. I subjoin a copy of the account to which I then referred, which cannot fail to interest every Christian reader:—

THE TEN LOST TRIBES.

"The following paragraph, which lately appeared in a German paper, under the head of Leipsic, is calculated to lead to some interesting inquiries.

"After having seen, for some years past, merchants from Tiflis, Persia, and Armenia, among the visitors at our fair, we have had for the first time two traders from Bucharìa with shawls, which are there manufactured of the finest wool of the goats of Thibet and Cashmere by the *Jewish* families, who form a third part of the population. In Bucharìa, formerly the capital of Sogdiana, the Jews have been very numerous ever since the Babylonian captivity, and are there as remarkable for their industry and manufactures as they are in England for their money transactions. It was not till last year that the Russian Government succeeded in extending its diplomatic missions far into Bucharìa. The above traders exchanged their shawls for coarse and fine woollen cloths of such colours as are most esteemed in the East."

"Much interest has been excited by the information which this paragraph conveys, and which is equally novel and important. In none of the geographical works which we have consulted do we find the least hint as to the existence in Bucharìa of such a body of Jews as that here mentioned, amounting to *one-third* of the whole population; but, as the fact can no longer be doubted, the next point of inquiry is, Whence have they proceeded, and how have they come to establish themselves in a region so remote from their original

country? This question, we think, can only be answered by supposing that these persons are the descendants of the long-lost ten tribes, concerning the fate of which, theologians, historians, and antiquaries, have been alike puzzled; and, however wild this hypothesis may at first sight appear, there are not wanting circumstances to render it far from being improbable. In the 17th chapter of the 2d book of Kings, it is said, 'In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away unto Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor, by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes;' and in the subsequent verses, as well as in the writings of the prophets, it is said, that the Lord then 'put away Israel out of his sight, and carried them away into the land of Assyria unto this day.' In the Apocrypha, 2d Esdras 13, it is said that 'the ten tribes were carried beyond the river Euphrates, and so they were brought into another land, when they took counsel together, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a further country, where never mankind dwelt; that they entered in at the narrow passages of the river Euphrates, when the springs of the flood were stayed, and went through the country a great journey, even of a year and a half:' and it is added, that 'there they will remain until the latter time, when they will come forth again.' The country beyond Bucharía was unknown to the ancients, and it is, we believe, generally admitted that the river Gozan, mentioned in the Book of Kings, is the same as the Ganges, which takes its rise in those countries in which the Jews reside of whom the Leipsic account speaks. The distance which these two Jewish merchants must have travelled cannot, therefore, be less than three thousand miles; and there can be little doubt that the Jews, whom they represent as a third part of the population of the country, are descendants of the ten tribes of Israel, settled by the river Gozan.

"The great plain of central Asia, forming four principal sides, viz., Little Bucharía, Thibet, Monguls, and Mantcheons,

contains a surface of 150,000 square miles, and a population of 20,000,000. This vast country is still very little known. The great traits of its gigantic formation compose, for the most part, all that we are certain of. It is an immense plain, of an excessive elevation, intersected with barren rocks and vast deserts of a black and almost moving sand. It is supported on all sides by mountains of granite, whose elevated summits determine the different climates of the great continent of Asia, and form the division of its waters. From its exterior flow all the great rivers of that part of the world. In the interior are a great quantity of rivers, having little declivity or no issue, which are lost in the sands, or perhaps feed stagnant waters. In the southern chains are countries populous, rich, and civilized, Little Bucharía, Great and Little Thibet. The people of the north are shepherds and wanderers. Their riches consist of their herds. Their habitations are tents, and their towns camps, which are transported according to their want of pasturage. The Bucharíans enjoy the right of trading to all parts of Asia, and the Thibetians cultivate the earth to advantage. The ancients had only a confused idea of central Asia. 'The inhabitants of this country,' as we learn from a great authority, 'are in a high state of civilization, possessing all the useful manufactures, and lofty houses built with stone. The merchants of Cashmere, on their way to Yarkand, in Little Bucharía, pass through Little Thibet. This country is scarcely known to European geographers.' The immense plain of central Asia is hemmed in and almost inaccessible by mountain ranges of the greatest elevation, which surround it on all sides, except towards China; and when the watchful jealousy of the Government of the Celestial Empire is considered, it will scarcely be wondered at, that the vast region in question is so little known. Such is the country which these newly-discovered Jews are said to inhabit in such numbers."

LECTURE VI.

THE BETTER COVENANT CONSIDERED AS THE NATIONAL COVENANT OF ISRAEL IN THE LATTER DAY.

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JEREMIAH XXXI. 31—34.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more

every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord. For they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

THE subject presented to us, in these words, is one so great and glorious, that we can scarcely do more, within the limits of a single sermon, than contemplate some principal features of it, and that but imperfectly.

May our Lord Jesus, the Divine "Messenger of the covenant," be with us, and bless us, while I proceed, without further introduction, to the consideration of it.

The leading topics suggested by it, and on which I propose now to treat, are the three following:—

I. The establishment of this new covenant with Israel and Judah, as a NATIONAL covenant.

II. The PLENARY fulfilment, in them, of its promises.

III. The character of the DISPENSATION resulting therefrom.

Consider, I. The establishment of this new covenant with Israel and Judah, as a NATIONAL covenant.

That the words of my text have never, hitherto, had their accomplishment, but yet wait their *proper* and *peculiar* fulfilment in the literal seed of Abraham, is an assertion, the truth of which it might seem hardly possible to doubt, after the most cursory and superficial glance at them.

The process, however, is but too familiar to most of us, by which passages of this kind, in defiance of the context in which they are set, and of their peculiar phraseology, much of it utterly inexplicable, except with reference to a particular people,—are yet turned from their natural and obvious meaning, and considered to have had their completion, in a way which leaves the nation to whom they were originally addressed, and of whom (at least, in the *letter*) they *alone* speak, without any interest at all, or, certainly, without any *peculiar*, and *national* interest, therein.

Thus, in a deservedly popular commentary of the present day, we meet with the following remarks on the passage before us:—

“Israel, as a nation, typified the true people of God. The old covenant made with them was typical of the new covenant made with all true believers, as one with Christ. This new covenant is not ratified with a nation, as such.....When Israel shall be again called into the Church, it will be by having the law written in their hearts, and

the covenant thus *inwardly* ratified to them." And, agreeably to all this, the marginal references, upon the phrases, "house of Israel," "house of Judah," are to certain passages of the New Testament, in which believing Gentiles are called "the Israel of God," "the circumcision."

So, then, in this easy and indirect way, Israel and Judah are stripped (as I have said) of all particular interest in the promise. It is even denied that the covenant is a *national* covenant, at all; and the whole is considered as fulfilled in the collective company of believers (Jew and Gentile) under the Gospel, as they are, individually, united to Christ, by faith.

Thus, in the outset of our subject, we are reduced to the strange necessity of proving, that, when God says, he will make a new covenant with the houses of Israel and Judah, he really means what, beyond a doubt, his words, *literally* taken, express; and is not speaking of Gentiles: however it be true, that, during the season of Israel's rejection of the covenant, Gentile sinners are, according to the wondrous counsels of Divine mercy, admitted to the enjoyment of its blessings: an enjoyment so marvellous, so little to have been looked for, before it was actually vouchsafed, that the apostle Paul everywhere stands amazed at this "*mystery of Christ*; which (saith he) in other ages

was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit:—*That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel.*” (Eph. iii. 4—6.)

That believing Gentiles, then, are, at present, interested in this covenant, we do most cordially admit. The Gospel covenant was, *in substance*, made with Abraham, when he was “in *uncircumcision.*” *Then* it was, that “his faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness;” and therefore, (as St. Paul argues, Rom. iv. 9—11,) he can be, and is, “the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised.”

So far, then, we are, all, perfectly agreed. But when our brethren go *further* than this, and say, the covenant is *so* the property of the present Gospel Church, that the Jews, as a nation, have no *peculiar, distinctive* right, or interest, therein; and that the covenant, when made with *them*, is to be made, only *in the same manner* that it is, now, made good to *us*; and that they are to receive it *through* us, and as *part* of us, the Church of the present dispensation;—then we, at once, join issue with them, and protest against such an interpretation of Scripture, as doing the utmost violence to its language.

In truth, such a principle of interpretation just

amounts to this :—that, seeing Israel of old was a type of the Gospel or spiritual Church, therefore, wherever the term “Israel” occurs, in an unfulfilled prophecy, we may, at our will, substitute “Gentile believers,” as meant, either *exclusively*, or without any *peculiar*, and *plenary* fulfilment, to the literal seed. What reasonable man will venture to defend such a canon of interpretation? the application of which has led to this palpable absurdity, that, whereas we meet with blessings and curses, predicted of one and the same people, Israel, we have, with all liberality, left the curses to the literal seed, and culled out every promise of blessing, given to that seed, as our own, sole, undisputed possession !

But, to come to the point before us. The real question in debate is, May the Jews of this day say, of the new covenant in my text, It is our covenant, which God will, ere long, establish with us, after the same *national* manner in which he established the *old* covenant with our fathers: only, now, with permanence? Such, I say, is the extraordinary question, that is raised on these plain words; a question, which (stranger still) the majority of the present Church answer in the negative; pleading that, though the *literal* Israel be *named*, the *spiritual* Israel is *meant*.

Now one thing, at least, is manifest. The

burden must fall on our opponents, to prove that what is *meant* is other than what is *said*. Do they tell us (as in the commentary referred to) the literal Israel was a type of the spiritual? We instantly grant it. Do they tell us again, that, therefore, there is a spiritual fulfilment of the covenant to believers? We grant it, also. But all this (we say) is nothing to the point. You must go further. What you need to prove is, that Israel of old (whose descendants still exist) was *so* a type of the spiritual Israel, that they were finally to *merge*, and *be lost*, in them whom they typified. Further, that the *spiritual* fulfilment *swallows up*, and *annihilates* the literal, instead of *co-existing* with it. Further, that, when God gave *participation* to the *spiritual* children, he meant, thenceforward, the *exclusion*, or the *extinction* as a nation, or the *loss of all peculiar privileges*, for ever, of the *literal* children. The proof of this has never been attempted; and established, I verily believe, it never can be.

God says, here, that he will, one day, make a *new* covenant with that people, with whose fathers he *before* made a covenant, in the wilderness. It is confessed, on all hands, that the words, taken literally, must mean the twelve tribes: for, certainly, Israel in the wilderness can, in no sense, be called the fathers of the present Gospel Church.

Now we ask, if we are to abide by the great Hooker's axiom, that, "where a literal interpretation will stand, the furthest from the literal is generally the worst,"—Where is the natural impossibility, or even improbability, in the thing here expressed, that the literal sense should *not* stand? that we must violently alter the terms, and make Jews to mean, here, believing Gentiles?

Had the expression, here, been, simply, "Zion," or, "my people," or even "Israel," without any addition or limitation, such an explanation of the term might have been more pardonable; although, even then, unjustifiable, if given, as if it had no *special* application to the literal people named. But we have, here, no such *general* term; but Israel (the *ten* tribes) distinguished from, and named along with Judah (the *two* tribes.) Further, the covenant is said to be made with "the HOUSE," that is, with the *family*, the *nation*, of Israel and Judah. When, and where, was ever the Gospel Church called the "HOUSE of Israel," the "HOUSE of Judah?" Further, (as I have already noticed,) this "house of Israel and house of Judah," is described as the descendants of that people, with whom God covenanted before, in the wilderness.

Nothing, then, can well be conceived more definite, more explicit, more incapable of misapplication to any other subject, than the terms

which are here employed. The descendants, after the flesh, of the sons of Jacob, are, unquestionably, the parties here named, who form the subject of the promise; and these, not as individuals, but as an united nation.

We are told, in the Commentary referred to, that this "new covenant is *not* ratified with a *nation*, as such." But, surely, this is an assertion which stands directly opposed to the express words of my text. It is perfectly true, indeed, that, *hitherto*, the new covenant has not been made with nations, as such. It was *proposed*, however, *even at the first*, by Messiah and his apostles, to the *nation* of Israel; but they rejected it, and they are, now, no longer in covenant with God. It was made, after that, with individual believers of the Jewish and other nations, and it is still made with Gentile sinners; but with neither Jew nor Gentile, *nationally*. The covenant has an *intermediate, spiritual* fulfilment, to a spiritual people. But, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the HOUSE of Israel, and with the HOUSE of Judah:" a covenant to be established with them, as the former covenant was with their fathers: the one, national, and with solemn promulgation and sanctions: the other, no less so.

The mere *terms*, then, of the passage, clearly

testify the national character of the covenant under consideration. But there are not wanting other considerations, in abundance, which all go to establish this important point.

Look, now, at the *context*, both preceding and following. You will find it wholly occupied, from the thirtieth chapter to the end of the thirty-third, (my text occurring in the thirty-first,) with the marvellous mercies and goodness which God has in store for his people Israel and Judah, "after that the fierce anger of the Lord shall have fallen with pain (as we see it *has* fallen) a continuing whirlwind, upon the head of the wicked:" respecting which judgment God says, (xxx. 24,) "In the LATTER DAYS ye shall consider it:" and then he adds, (xxx. 1,) "AT THE SAME TIME, saith the Lord, will I be the God of ALL THE FAMILIES of Israel, and they shall be my people:" or, as St. Paul expresses the same thing, (Rom. xi. 26,) "ALL Israel shall be saved."

Along with this, you have assurance heaped upon assurance, of their restoration to their own land: of their singing in the height of Zion, *and never sorrowing any more at all*: of God sowing the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast: of his never turning away from them to do them good: of his rejoicing over them to plant them in

their land, assuredly, with his whole heart, and with his whole soul: of his building Israel and Judah, AS AT THE FIRST: of all the nations of the earth being even stricken with *fear and trembling*, for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity, which God will procure unto them: of his giving them a king, whose name is to be, "Jehovah our Righteousness:" of the impossibility of God casting them away, or of their ceasing to be A NATION before him FOR EVER: an impossibility as great, saith God, as of the ordinances of day and night departing from before me: and, lastly, of the city being built to the Lord, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner; with an exact specification of its boundaries, in its circuit; including places which have never yet been included within its walls; and, to conclude all, "It shall NOT BE PLUCKED UP," God says, "NOR THROWN DOWN, ANY MORE, FOR EVER." Then, in the midst of all these "great and mighty things," as God himself, here, entitles them, (chap. xxxiii. 3,) comes in this, as ONE of them, "Behold, I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."

The evidence thus furnished, by the context alone, as to the national character of this covenant, seems to be altogether irresistible.

I pass, now, to another consideration, to show

that this covenant,—instead of being only a *spiritual* covenant, as at present, made with men, as *believing* men, whether Jew or Gentile, and belonging as much to one as to the other, and of no national bearing whatsoever,—is specially intended of God to be established with the nation of Israel, as such.

Look at the use which the Spirit of God makes of this prophecy, in the New Testament. To whom does he speak of it? To Gentiles? No, but to HEBREW believers; and to them, to show them, that, whereas their *nation* was obstinately clinging to the *Mosaic* covenant, as if that were to be perpetual, God, ever since the days of Jeremiah, had found fault with *that* covenant, and had promised to make, with the same people with whom he had made it, *another*, a “*new*,” a “*better* covenant, established upon better promises.” The argument of the apostle, observe, is with *Jews*, about the duty of their nation to abandon their *old* covenant, on the ground that God had foretold *another* covenant, which he meant to establish with them; which other covenant, the apostle has been showing, was brought in, was ripe for their reception, by the death of the Mediator, Christ. Say now (as we find it said) “The new covenant is not made with a nation, as such:” that “the old covenant with Israel typified the new covenant

with believers ;” by which is intimated, that Israel, *as a nation*, has *no concern* with the new covenant, —the apostle’s argument is without force, or even meaning. It evidently proceeds on the assumption, that the *new* covenant is for the *same* people, and to be made with them *in the same way*, as the *old*: and, in truth, the very terms, first and second, new and old, better and faulty, imply the same thing. The covenant is *not* new, *not* second, to *us*, in respect of the old covenant: for, to *us*, it is the **ONLY** covenant that God ever made with us.

There is yet one other consideration, which proves, not only that the nation of Israel is, specially, the subject of whom this covenanting is predicated, but that it must assuredly be, one day, actually made good to that people.

It may perhaps be admitted by some, that this new covenant was, at first, proposed to the Jews; and that, if they had *accepted* it, the *nation* would have enjoyed the benefits of it. But, seeing that they rejected it, and that the Lord himself told them, “the kingdom shall be taken from you,” the covenant has, *now*, passed over to the Gentiles, as their rightful possession; and the Jews, if they will have its blessings, must come in to the Gospel Church, as individual believers; and by incorporation with the present Church, and not as a separate community, receive its grace. In other

words, no *distinct* covenanting of God with that people is, now, to be looked for.

Now, in answer to this, I might remind you of the absolute pledge of God here, "I WILL MAKE a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:" and, if we be met with the plea of an *implied condition*, and the sin of Israel and Judah be objected, in bar of fulfilment,—then I answer, that the terms of the covenant itself render this impossible; for it specially *contemplates* such rebellion, and lays the foundation of all its mighty blessings in the free forgiveness of it all. "For, I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Indeed, in this very chapter, God seems expressly to have *anticipated* such an objection. (Ver. 37.) "Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, *for all that they have done*, saith the Lord." So again, (chap. xxxiii. 25, 26,) "If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I also cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant." "Have they stumbled that they might *fall*?" (*finally*, that is,) asks the apostle: "God forbid." If Christ be "set for the fall," so, remember, "for the rising again, of many in

Israel:" and remember also, that, when they are "grafted in again," it shall be "into *their own* olive-tree." (Rom. xi. 24; Luke ii. 34.)

But the consideration that is, more immediately, in my mind, is of another kind, and is (if possible) yet more forcible. I have said that the old covenant was put an end to, and the new covenant brought in, by the death of Christ. He is the "Mediator of the better covenant." His blood sealed and established it for ever, with God, on their behalf for whom it was so ratified. "This is my blood OF THE NEW COVENANT," said Christ, when he gave the cup to his disciples; and so St. Paul calls the blood of Christ, "the blood OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT." (Heb. xiii. 20.) The blood shed by Moses, its mediator, ratified the *first* covenant at Sinai: and the blood shed by Jesus, even his *own* most precious blood, ratified the *new* covenant.

The covenant, then, thus sealed, or ratified, in Christ's blood, henceforth cannot but stand good, between God, who is *one* of the parties to it, and certain others, who are the *second* party to it; Jesus being Surety, or Mediator, between the two.

The question then is, Who are they, the *second* party to the covenant? You will say (and *we* say the same) God's spiritual people, Jew or

Gentile; all they that believe. "They that are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." But then we say, Not God's spiritual people ONLY, but the literal Israel also, AS A NATION, were *specially* contemplated of the Mediator, in his bloodshedding. He is the Messiah, the King, *of that people*: and, AS SUCH, he contracted the covenant with God. For *them*, his own people and nation, he shed that blood which is the *seal* of the covenant.

For this we have the express words of Holy Scripture. Mark the words of the Evangelist St. John, (chap. xi. 50, 51.) Caiaphas, the high priest, said, "It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." Now, observe:—And this spake he, NOT OF HIMSELF: but, being high priest that year, he PROPHESED that Jesus should die FOR THAT NATION." Mark, "for that nation," Jesus shed the blood which ratified the covenant; to which, therefore, the NATION, thus became, necessarily, a party, in Christ, (though not *immediately*, in respect of *actual enjoyment*,) and God the other party; engaged TO THEM, to fulfil, in them, the grace of it. Remark, too, that a notice, by the evangelist, of the *spiritual* Israel, the elect Church from among the Gentiles, immediately follows; in which they are, pointedly,

distinguished from the literal Israel. “And not for that nation ONLY, but that, ALSO, he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”

This testimony to the point we are establishing—Israel’s interest, as a nation, in the new covenant,—is, to my mind, most striking and conclusive. The sacrifice which established the covenant was made for the nation by its king, acting, herein, as mediator between them and God, that the whole nation might be preserved and blessed, according to the tenor of it; and, in virtue hereof, they *are* preserved, to this hour. And it is not a little remarkable, that the last words which, it is probable, the Holy Ghost ever spake, by the ministers of the old dispensation, (when that covenant was just expiring, by the death of Messiah,) were a testimony to this most interesting and important fact,—the interest of the nation, as such, in the covenant that was to succeed it.

Such, then, is our argument,—derived from the text itself; from the whole preceding and following context, for several chapters; from the use made of the passage in the New Testament, in an argument with Hebrew believers; and, lastly, from their Messiah (the Mediator of the covenant) being expressly declared, by the Spirit,

judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts xiii. 46.)

Thus, indeed, through Israel's rejection of it, we confess, with joy, and wonder, and praise to God for his mercies, this rich covenant of blessing has come, for eighteen hundred years, to be the most precious privilege and inheritance of the Gentile world: of the elect of God, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The "blessing of Abraham" is "come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ." We "receive the promise of the Spirit, through faith." (Gal. iii. 14.) We are "grafted in" among the natural branches, and "with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree." The spiritual benefits of the covenant flow with a Divine fulness into our hearts, through precious faith in Jesus Christ. "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him: for, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 12, 13.) These are truths, which we would not, cannot question, for an instant. We enjoy the grace of the blessed covenant. We know, from experience, that its promises are all truth to us; "all yea, and amen, in Christ Jesus," (2 Cor. i. 20,) to every one that believeth. "The casting

away of them has been the reconciling of the world:" the "fall of them the riches of the world:" the "diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles." We have "received mercy through their unbelief." (See Rom. xi. 12, 15, 30.)

But, Is their fall, their unbelief, to be always? Shall Israel never be restored? never enjoy the new covenant of their Messiah? or enjoy it, only by coming in to the Church of the present dispensation, with the loss of all national distinctions and privileges? Is that word of God to fail, (verse 36,) they shall not "cease from being a nation before me for ever:" and shall Jesus never be "King of the Jews," when he lived and died, asserting his right and title, so to be? O away with these miserable Gentile prejudices, and pride, and "boasting against the natural branches:" (Rom. xi. 18:) to support which we are obliged to do violence to the plainest and reiterated testimonies of God's word. My brethren, the present election from among the Gentiles has its "fulness:" and "when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in," mark what is to follow. "So, all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. This is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Rom. xi. 25—27, from Isa. lix. 20, 21.) You see, there

is a covenant of God unto them, even as they now are, to which he has respect, and in virtue of which he will save them, and send Messiah, their King, to be their deliverer, and take away their sins. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he may have mercy upon all." (Rom. xi. 32.) He has *cast away, nationally*, for a season, that he may have *mercy* on them *nationally*. "Behold the days come, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, after those days, saith the Lord."

I proceed, II., to the consideration, in detail, of the several promises of this new covenant, which (as we have seen) is to be established with Israel and Judah, in the latter day.

And here I may make one remark, preliminary to such consideration, and which will be our clue to the interpretation of all the particular promises of the covenant. Seeing that the covenant is specially *Israel's* covenant, (however, for a long interval, through their rejection of it, believing Gentiles have had the rich spiritual enjoyment of its blessings,) it is evident, that, when, at length, God's engagement to establish it with them shall take effect, there will then be the most complete, unqualified accomplishment, to the letter, of every particular promise, the development of all its grace, in the fullest sense and manner of which

it is capable. As it was with the old law covenant, so will it be, also, with this. "Not one jot or tittle can pass from it, till all be fulfilled." It will be fulfilled in them, not merely in the *inward* experience (as now) of believing individuals among the nation, but *nationally*; so that it will express the collective experience, and be (as it were) the epitome of the history of that whole people.

If we examine the terms of this new covenant of God with Israel, we find two great and leading particulars under which the blessings promised in it may be arranged: JUSTIFICATION and SANCTIFICATION: the free, complete, everlasting forgiveness, and oblivion, of all possible offences; and then, all spiritual blessedness, resulting therefrom: more especially, these three: divine *renewal*, divine *relationship*, and divine *illumination*.

The basis, and foundation stone, of the whole edifice of covenant blessings, is (as I have said) the most free, perfect, and everlasting forgiveness, and oblivion, of all possible offences. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more: or, (as the apostle quotes the words, Heb. viii. 12,) "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

These are the terms which God lays down, as

the beginning of all his future dealings with Israel. So he takes them into covenant; with the most entire obliteration, the clean wiping out, of all that mighty mass of national iniquities, under the weight of which they have been lying, accursed, for, now, nearly eighteen hundred years, and only *aggravating* their guilt, by their *continued* impenitence and rebellion against their King. What are the judgments of God that are yet to fall upon that devoted people, it is impossible, accurately, to tell. Their own Scriptures clearly predict a last dreadful tribulation, "the time of Jacob's trouble," (Jer. xxx. 7,) when they shall drink "the *dregs* of the cup of trembling, and wring them out:" when "the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Dan. ix. 27.)

But then, at length, mercy succeeds to judgment. "I will not contend *for ever*," saith the God with whom we have to do, "neither will I be *always* wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls that I have made." (Isa. lvii. 16.) And, when once mercy's tide sets in, to that people, O with what a swelling, overflowing flood, will it speedily obliterate *all traces* of foregoing judgments! swallow up, and bury in the depths of everlasting oblivion, all their former shame, and bygone iniquities, and fill every bosom, of the

ransomed thousands of Israel, with wonder, and joy, and praise. "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury. (Here, at least, is not the Gospel Church; there can be no doubt, what is the Jerusalem that is here addressed.).....Thus saith thy Lord, the Lord, and thy God, that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury: thou shalt NO MORE drink it AGAIN, but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee." (Isa. li. 17, 22, 23.) "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment; but with EVERLASTING KINDNESS will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is AS THE WATERS OF NOAH unto me: for, as I have sworn, that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." (Isa. liv. 7—10.) "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God: speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished; that her iniquity is pardoned; for

she hath received, of the Lord's hand, double, for all her sins." (Isa. xl. 1, 2.) "I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (Isa. xliii. 25.) "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." (Isa. xlv. 22.) "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." (Jer. L. 20.) "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honour, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble, for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity, that I procure unto it." (Jer. xxxiii. 8, 9.)

See, here, (as I have said) the *flood-tide* of mercies and forgivenesses setting in, to Israel; the Lord turning the captivity of his people "as the rivers in the south," when, for ages, the scorching heat of Divine judgments has dried up all their channels of blessing, and made them as the parched desert, and like the heath in the

wilderness. But, now, the Lord returns to Jerusalem in mercies. In that day, (the day in which “the Lord shall set his hand again, **THE SECOND TIME**, to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, &c.”) “In that day, thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” (Isa. xii. 1—3.)

O what a day will that be to Israel, when, instead of the cross of Messiah being to them (as now) a stumbling-block, they shall see that the precious blood-shedding of Immanuel is the foundation of all their mercies; the seal of their new covenant of grace and peace: the life of all their joys:—when they shall say, in the language of their own prophet, which they can now so little explain or understand,—“Surely he hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.....For the transgression of (us) his people

was he stricken." (Isaiah liii. 4, 5, 8.) This shall make that "great mourning in Jerusalem," (Zech. xii. 11,) when "the land shall mourn, every family apart:" when "they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."

And when once "their uncircumcised heart" shall be thus "humbled, and they shall accept the punishment of their iniquity," (Lev. xxvi. 41,) then, all the grace of this new covenant of Messiah shall flow forth to them. "A fountain shall be opened, in that day, to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness." (Zech. xiii. 1.) The Lord will "appoint, unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." (Isaiah lxi. 3.) "I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more." Yes, that sin of sins shall be forgiven, yea, forgotten, yea, made an end of for ever,—the murder of Jesus, their King!—the blood of the Son of God! That blood which they imprecated on themselves, saying, "His blood be on us, and on our children,"—that blood, which has so long been upon them for judgment, shall, then, be

sweetly sprinkled on them for mercies : the price and pledge of blessing—the blood *of their covenant*. “ Though their sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isaiah i. 18.) Wonderful grace, and miracle of love, of God, which (blessed be his name) we, poor Gentile sinners, experience along with them ! forgiveness, by the precious blood of Jesus, of accursed sinners, who shed the blood that saves them !

You have a beautiful exhibition of the feelings of Israel, in the contemplation of this grace and goodness of God, in the concluding words of their prophet Micah. The Lord has been comforting Zion : telling them, how their walls shall be built again : how he will feed them in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old : how, *according to the days of their coming out of the land of Egypt*, he will do unto them marvellous things ; how the nations shall see, and be confounded at all their might ; they shall lay their hand on their mouth ; their ears shall be deaf. And then follows that burst of adoring ecstasy, of that whole people,—no longer able to contain themselves, in the sense of this forgiving grace, and plenteousness of goodness,—“ Who is a God like unto thee ! that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage : he

retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again : he will have compassion upon us : he will subdue our iniquities ; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers, from the days of old." (Micah vii. 11—20.) "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israelafter those days, saith the Lord.....I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more."

We come, now, to the *other class* of promises, of this covenant, which are built upon the mercies we have been considering : of which God says, I will do thus and thus, FOR I will be merciful. We have included them under the general name of *promises of sanctification* ; as they set forth a state of singular holiness, and spiritual glory, of the whole nation of Israel.

The first of these promises is one

1. *Of divine renewal.* "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."

This God *now* does, for every believing sinner, Gentile and Jew alike, who "lays hold on his covenant : " comes to him (that is) for mercy on the terms of it, through Jesus its Mediator. But this grace, is at present, limited to *individuals* :

the “few” who are “chosen,” out of the “many called.” Nations, as such, know nothing of it. When the new covenant shall be made with Israel, it will be otherwise. It will then be a *national* covenant, fulfilled in the *whole* seed of Jacob, with hardly, if, indeed, in *their* case, with *any* exception.

At present, God is taking *out of* every nation a people to his name. In the case of restored Israel, he will take the whole people: the universal nation. The present dispensation of an *election* will then have gone by, and that of *universality* will have succeeded to it. “ALL Israel shall be saved.” He shall “turn away ungodliness FROM JACOB.” He will “have mercy upon ALL.” (Rom. xi. 26, 32.)

Accordingly, the designation of Israel, in that day, is, “the righteous nation.” “Thy people shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS; they shall inherit the land for ever.” (Isaiah lx. 21.) “In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, We have a strong city: salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that THE RIGHTEOUS NATION WHICH KEEPETH THE TRUTH may enter in.” (Isaiah xxvi. 1, 2.) “And they shall call them (when Christ their ‘salvation’ cometh to them, v. 11), THE HOLY PEOPLE: The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out: A city not forsaken.” (Isaiah lxii. 12.)

“And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called HOLY: even EVERY ONE THAT IS WRITTEN AMONG THE LIVING, in Jerusalem.” (Isaiah iv. 3.)

“And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, THE CITY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; The faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness; and the destruction of the transgressors, and of the sinners, shall be together; and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed,”—none such (you see) are to be left. (Isaiah i. 26—28.) “Awake, awake! put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the HOLY CITY; for, henceforth, there shall NO MORE come into thee THE UNCIRCUMCISED and the UNCLEAN.” (Isaiah lii. 1.)

What have we here, my brethren, but that glorious thing which has never yet been seen, in our miserable world; but which shall be seen, first, in the nation of Israel,—a people,—one and all of them,—the entire community,—“**HOLINESS TO THE LORD:**” “every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.” This is to be their national covenant, in the days of those mercies which are the foundation of it. “I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts.” Their *old* covenant had this law written

for them on tables of *stone*. This, on “the *fleshy* tables of the *heart*.” Their *old* covenant declared the *terms* of the law, and cursed for disobedience: This gives the law in their hearts, and gives strength, and spirit, for its fulfilment.

If we look into their prophetic Scriptures, we find them full of this glory of the new covenant, the inward sanctification, and divine renewal, of that whole nation. “I will give them (says God) one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant (this same new covenant) with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good; and I will plant them in this land, assuredly, (note this, that you may be sure, who they are that are here spoken of,) with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.” (Jer. xxxii. 39—41.) So, again, by the prophet Ezekiel, “I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. (Note, again, this mark upon the people addressed.) Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you: a new heart also

will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers," &c. (Ezek. xxxvi. 24, and following verses.)

Now, here, we have this new covenant promise, of the gift of God's Spirit to dwell in his people, and sanctify them, given to that Israel, to whom God pledges himself that he will, at that same time, gather them again out of the countries, and give them the land that he gave to their fathers. This interweaving of their recovery from their dispersions, and restoration to their land, cuts off all escape from the proper and special application of this most glorious promise of God, to the literal seed of Jacob.

In that day of Israel's mercies, "the Spirit shall be POURED upon them from on high," (Isaiah xxxii. 15,) the Spirit of holiness, in a manner to which there has been, hitherto, no parallel; and of which the Pentecostal shower was but an earnest. This is that "gracious rain" which God will "send upon his inheritance," whereby he will "refresh it, when it is weary." (Psalm lxi. 9.) So St. Peter, in his sermon to the Jews, refers to

the times of this new covenant grace, as “times of refreshing (καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως) from the presence of the Lord :” and it is worthy of remark, that those words of Isaiah, “Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high,” are, in the Greek version of Symmachus, rendered, “until there be REFRESHING (ἀνάψυξις ἐξ ὑψους, qu. וְיָרֵד for וְיָרֵא) from on high.” “Repent ye, therefore, (says St. Peter, Acts iii. 19, 20,) and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out; that times of refreshing may come, from the presence of the Lord, and he may send Jesus Christ, which has been fore-ordained for you.” (ὅπως ἂν ἔλθωσι καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως καὶ ἀποστείλῃ τὸν προκεχειρισμένον ὑμῖν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.) These times, observe, are, when Israel’s sin shall be blotted out; and the “refreshing” lies in the fulness of the effusion of the Holy Ghost, (the great “Comforter,”) upon that whole people; writing God’s holy, and good, and perfect law, in their hearts; turning them, in truth, to God; making “their peace as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea.” “I will put my law in their inward parts; for I will forgive their iniquity.”

A second, of these promises of sanctification, is

2. *Of Divine relationship.* “And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

This promise, clearly, implies one, or both, of

two things: either, that God shall be Israel's God, under *this* covenant, in *another* and *better* manner, than ever he was *before*: or, that he shall be their God *again*, and they his people, after they shall long have *ceased* to be to him in that relation:

In *both* these senses the words are true, and will be made good to Israel, in the day of their mercy.

The words occur, as part of the *old* covenant: but there is a *fulness* of glory in them, as they are adopted into the *new* covenant, which shall utterly eclipse all their *former* experience, when they had only the shekinah,—the *shadow* of the Divine Majesty, visibly displayed among them.

Further, the words are true, in the sense which implies, that Israel, at the time of God's making the new covenant with them, shall have ceased to stand to him in that relation which is here expressed. Such is, precisely, the present condition of that people. They have long been out of covenant with God: cast off, but not for ever.

And herein (I may observe, by the way, from Ben Ezra) we have our two strongest proofs, that the splendid promises of God to Israel, by his prophets, had not their fulfilment in their return from Babylon. First, because these mercies are promised to Israel under a *NEW* covenant, an

EVERLASTING covenant; whereas it is notorious, that Israel returned from Babylon under their OLD covenant, and *continued* under it, until Christ. Secondly, because these mercies are promised to Israel, at a time when they shall long have *ceased* to be a people to God, and God a God to them: whereas, in Babylon, however God *punished* his people, certainly, they never *ceased* to be such to him. In their *present* dispersion, God *has* said to them, “Lo Ammi: ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.”

But, “in the place where it was said to them, Ye are *not* my people, there shall they be called, The sons of the living God.” (Hos. i. 10.) “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

This promise, like the foregoing, has, doubtless, a very blessed fulfilment, after a spiritual manner, in the experience of believers under the Gospel. It is true to God’s spiritual Israel, the people chosen of him, in Christ, to be a people to his praise. But, if we look at the promise as part of a covenant with a *nation*, a body *politic*, dwelling together as one community, in their land, it is clear, it must have to *them* a fulfilment of *another kind*, than their individual, spiritual enjoyment and service of God, though that will be included.

In fact, God’s own interpretation, by his acts,

of this promise, under the old covenant, is sufficient to prove the point. For, by this engagement of the covenant, he accounted himself *pledged to the nation to be their KING*; and, according to the character of that typical and imperfect dispensation, he *was* their king in the midst of them; dwelling among them, and ruling them, not, indeed, *visibly*, but, yet, by *visible symbols* of his presence: the glory of the Lord appearing over the mercy-seat, and “his Urim and his Thummim” being “with Levi, his Holy One.” (Deut. xxxiii. 8.)

Now, we argue thus. If, under that dispensation of *shadows*, these *visible displays* of the Divine glory were, yet, necessary to the fulfilment of this promise, what can we look for, when the *reality* is come, which the former dispensation prefigured, but the *substance* of the Mosaic shadow—the very presence of Deity: Immanuel, God with us? “If the ministration of *condemnation* be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness *exceed* in glory:” and how can the *symbol* of Deity be exceeded, but by the *actual presence* of the Being symbolized? An *invisible, spiritual* presence of Christ may satisfy the promise, while (as at present) the covenant is made good in the hearts of an *invisible, spiritual people*. But, when the *kingdom* shall be *visible*,

certainly, the *King* will be so, too. When the covenant shall be Israel's *national* covenant, Messiah, their prince, will remember, and fulfil his name, "Immanuel, GOD WITH US." He has the promise of the throne of his father David, and that throne he will fill. He is now gone into the far country, "to receive for himself the kingdom:" he is sitting on God's throne, at his right hand, till all things be ripe, for his enemies being made his footstool, and then he will "return, *having received the kingdom.*" (Luke xix. 11—15.) So he told his nation, when he presented himself to them, at the first, as their king, and they rejected him: "Ye shall not see me, henceforth, TILL ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. xxiii. 39.) Then they shall behold him again. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion," and he "shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i. 33.) Then that word shall be accomplished, that is addressed to them by their Prophet Zephaniah, (ch. iii. 14, 15,) "Sing, O daughter of Zion: shout, O Israel: be glad, and rejoice with all thine heart, O daughter of Jerusalem: the Lord hath taken away thy judgments: he hath cast out thine enemy: THE KING OF ISRAEL, even the Lord, is IN THE MIDST OF THEE: thou shalt not see

evil, any more." No: God himself is *with* them, and is their God: and this will well account for all that singular glory, which is described as resting, in that day, upon Israel: "THY God, THY GLORY." "The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients, gloriously." "I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

The third, and last, of these promises of sanctification, is one

3. *Of Divine illumination.* "They shall teach, no more, every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

A partial, spiritual fulfilment, this promise also, like the rest, has, even now, in the experience of all who believe. They "have an unction from the Holy One, and they know all things:" all (that is, for facts compel us so to limit it) that is essential for them to know, connected with the salvation of their souls: such a knowledge herein, as the holiest and wisest, of Old Testament saints, could, in no way, attain.

But, if we consider the precise terms of this promise, "They shall no more teach, saying, Know the Lord: All shall know me, from the least to the greatest:" we must, at once, acknow-

ledge, that, in anything like a *strict* and *literal* sense, these words, even as respects the spiritual Church, have never yet had an accomplishment. Mutual exhortations, and helps, and teachings, are still needed, by God's most favoured children, notwithstanding the increase of light, and the superior inward illumination by the Spirit, enjoyed, in our day, above the days of the old covenant.

It shall be otherwise, in that day of spiritual light, and brightness of glory, that is presently to dawn on Israel. Then this promise of the covenant shall have, in them, its *plenary* and strict accomplishment. "It shall come to pass, afterward, (says Joel, ch. ii. 28, after the destruction of the northern army,) that I will pour out my Spirit (evidently, as a spirit of illumination,) upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: your old men shall dream dreams: your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and the handmaids, in those days, will I pour out my Spirit." "All shall know me, from the least of them (the servants and the handmaids) unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

In the day of Pentecost, and in the first days of the Gospel Church, God was pleased to give a little *earnest* of this grace. We have only to look at 1 Cor. xii. to see how differently things were

ordered, to what they are, or could possibly be, now, in their worshipping assemblies, when (as the apostle tells them) they might “*all* prophesy, one by one, that all might learn, and all might be comforted.” But these gifts presently ceased in the Church. This promise is to have its completeness of truth, when the covenant shall be Israel’s national covenant, in the latter days.

The reason of so singular a state of things, so marvellous an illumination of that whole people, one and all of them, that instruction, such as is common with us at present, shall be absolutely useless, and superseded,—The reason (I say) of this, on *our* view, is evident. The great Prophet of the Church—the true Solomon—“who, of God, is made unto us wisdom,” shall then be present with his people Israel, and the anointing upon the head of their king shall flow down to every subject of his blessed rule: “The spirit of wisdom and understanding: the spirit of counsel and might: the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make (them) of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.” (Isaiah xi. 2, 3.) Then God’s Urim and Thummim shall be with *all* his holy ones, as, in imperfect type and “pattern” of these “heavenly things,” it was with Levi, under the old covenant. “Their sons and their daughters, their old and their young,

their servants and their handmaidens,—on all of them (saith God) I will pour out my Spirit.” “All shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.” “I will POUR water upon him that is thirsty, and FLOODS upon the dry ground. I will pour MY SPIRIT upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” (Isaiah xliv. 3.) “O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And (more than all beside) ALL THY CHILDREN SHALL BE TAUGHT OF THE LORD, and great shall be the peace of thy children.” (Isaiah liv. 11—13.) “All shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.”

A few words must suffice, in conclusion, on

III. The character of the dispensation, resulting from so glorious a fulfilment of such “exceeding great and precious promises” to the whole collective body of that great and mighty nation,—the restored Israel.

There is a strange jealousy, in the present Gospel Church, (just as there was in the ancient Jewish Church,) against any kind of dispensation, however glorious, different from that under which

we live. The millennium they will have to be, but the present dispensation perfected, and essentially of the same character. But, setting aside now, for a moment, the glorious hope to which we cling, of the manifestation and personal reign of the Lord from heaven, in a restored earth, and in the day of the earth's rest, if our brethren would only put together, and well weigh, the particulars, which even themselves confess are to have place, in the millennial state of the earth, we think they would see, at once, that they are such as to constitute a day of GLORY, not perfect indeed, but yet, as essentially and widely different from the present day of GRACE—the *Christian* day, as *that* is from the *Jewish*, or even more so. I have not time to follow out the idea. Let me suggest only one feature of difference, rendering inapplicable a vast portion of Scripture to the then condition of the Church, viz. the difference between the Church oppressed, suffering with Christ, limited in extent, as now; and the Church co-extensive with the world, free from Satan's vexing, and everywhere triumphant. Who can estimate the revolution involved herein?

But let us look, now, at the house of Israel and Judah, established as "one kingdom, in their land, upon the mountains of Israel," at the beginning of that day of blessedness, when they shall stand

forth, in the sight of the wondering, admiring nations, the covenant people, again, of Jehovah their God, with all these excellent promises fulfilled to them to the letter, in all the length and breadth of their community.

What a marvellous sight will then be presented to the eyes of men ! That people, for so many ages cast off by their God ; scattered and peeled ; a byword and a derision ; an astonishment and a hissing, for their iniquities, among all nations : now, in a moment, with miracles and wonders, brought back to the land of their fathers : all their sins forgiven : all their transgressions buried in everlasting forgetfulness. Instead thereof, the Holy Ghost filling every soul : the holy law of God written in their hearts, and influencing their affections : the light and knowledge of God enlightening, not *some*, nor *many*, but ALL of them, from the least to the greatest : God, most gloriously, and (as *we* believe) *visibly*, in the person of Jesus Christ, present with them, as their God : *showing* himself a God to them, in unparalleled communications of Divine goodness : and they manifested as his people, in the face of all the nations of the earth, by the most illustrious displays of his power and providence in their behalf, and their returns of entire affection, and devotion, and willing service. This will be

such a sight as the world has never seen, has never thought to see, from the day that God created man upon the earth, to this hour.

And what (think you) will be the effect of this grace to Israel, on the nations who shall witness it? The apostle will inform us. "The receiving of them" shall be, to the world, "LIFE FROM THE DEAD." The *casting away* of them has been the reconciling of the world: how much *more*, their *fulness*. Then that word to Abraham shall have its full accomplishment, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The glory begins with Israel. Its sun, like the natural sun, rises, first, in the east. On them, first, will the morning dawn of that blessed day, the day of the rest, the Sabbath-keeping that remains for this weary world, when "the sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it, and the meek shall inherit the earth," and the "saints shall possess the kingdom." But the day that first dawns on *them* will spread itself to every spot of this habitable globe. We believe, indeed, that the beginning of God's mercies to Israel will be marked with corresponding judgments, desolating judgments, on the guilty nations who have oppressed Israel, and abused the long day of Gospel grace and privilege, vouchsafed to them in vain. The image of

Daniel (chap. ii.), or the four Gentile monarchies, must be broken in pieces, by the blow of the stone cut out without hands. "The gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, and the clay," must be "broken in pieces together, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor;" and so the stone, EXISTING ALONE in the earth, "shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth." "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, (saith the Father to his exalted Son;) thou shalt BREAK them with a ROD OF IRON: thou shalt DASH them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps. ii. 8, 9.) All existing institutions and kingdoms opposed to Christ must perish, and "few men," as Isaiah speaks (chap. xxiv.), few, at all events, of the professing Christian nations, "be left."

But, thenceforth, a new day, another order of things is begun, in the earth. The "handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains," shall grow and multiply; "the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish, like grass of the earth." (Ps. lxxii. 16.) Satan shall be bound, who now deceives, and destroys the nations. The curse of God shall be rolled away from the earth: there will be a paradise state of it, and of them that dwell in it; specially (we believe) in Palestine. There will be a dispensation of glory, of righteousness,

of the Spirit, in its fulness. The holy people, the righteous nation, Israel, shall walk before their present, manifested King, in the beauty of holiness: and in them, and along with them, shall all the families of the earth be blessed, like them. Christ shall be king, not (as at present) of a few hidden ones, among the nations of the ungodly; but of the whole population of the globe. "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.) Christ will not then (as at present) "*sprinkle* many nations," with his Spirit: (a term which most accurately describes his influences, in the *now* dispensation of an *election* :) but "the Spirit shall be *poured* upon us, from on high." "I will *pour* water upon him that is thirsty: *floods* upon the dry ground." "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas." (Habak. ii. 14.) All people, nations, and languages shall serve him. (Dan. vii. 14.) "The whole earth shall be filled with his glory." (Psalm lxxii. 19.) The day of Israel's covenant is the day of "the regeneration," physical and moral, of this lower world. Accordingly, God speaks of this kindness to Israel, as if it were the same thing with the creation we are looking for, of new heavens and a new earth. "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth;

and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever, in that which I create: FOR BEHOLD, I CREATE JERUSALEM A REJOICING, and her people a joy.” (Isaiah lxx. 17, 18.) “I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, AND SAY UNTO ZION, THOU ART MY PEOPLE.” (Isaiah li. 16.) “Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forest, and every tree therein: *for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.*” (Is. xlv. 23.)

See, my brethren, the immensity of glory and joy and blessedness, the new creation of this wretched world, for which we are waiting, till the season of Israel’s mercies, the day of their new covenant, be come. O let us give our God “no rest, until he arise, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” “Publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.” Amen, Amen.

LECTURE VII.

THE PRESENT DISPERSION A MORAL WARNING
TO THE GENTILES, A LITERAL FULFILMENT
OF PROPHECY, AND A SURE PLEDGE
OF THEIR FUTURE RETURN.

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ROMANS XI. 20.

*“ Well ; because of unbelief they were broken off,
and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded,
but fear.”*

God has greatly honoured the Jewish nation,—he has from the beginning assigned to them a prominent place in the development of his purpose of mercy to the world, and every particular connected with their history must be deeply interesting to the Scriptural student. In taking a rapid glance at their high appointment in the Divine purpose, two particulars attract

our notice. The first is the agency in which they have been employed as individuals, and the second the result to be accomplished in them as a nation. The first embraces the covenant of grace according to an election of persons; the second, the constitution of a nation wholly righteous, and the diffusion of national righteousness over the whole earth. The dealings of God with Israel hitherto, exemplify the former—the latter remains to be fulfilled.

But we must observe further, that the completion of the purpose according to the election of persons, was not confined to the Jewish nation. Others were included in the covenant, who, in due time, were to be admitted to the privileges of individual salvation, before this dispensation of Divine love closed. Hence, we contemplate two distinct families in the earth. The Jew and the Gentile. The Gentile, occupying a secondary place to the Jew, but in process of time enjoying equal privileges in the covenant of grace. For while, “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek,” marks the order of rank; “unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God,” marks the “no difference” and equality as to privilege, for both are made one in Jesus Christ. Yet, it will be admitted, the Jew has had the precedence

in the favour of God, and has been employed as the herald to usher in the grace of God to the Gentile; and having effected this primary object, we assume that the Jew will hereafter be employed nationally to make known the love and mercy of God to all the nations upon earth. And this intimately concerns every one of us, as a brief review of the covenant of grace will testify. For, beginning with Abraham, the father of the faithful and the friend of God, we find the Lord raised up in his family a righteous seed—an election of individuals, who, from one generation to another, walked by faith, kept the truth, saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon earth. But they were few in number compared with the bulk of the nation descended according to the flesh from the loins of Abraham. There were Ishmaels, and Esaus, and Nadabs, and Abihus, and Korahs, and Jeroboams, and Ahabs, who rebelled against God, forsook the Lord, provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, went away backwards, broke down his altars, slew his prophets with the sword, bowed down to Baal, sacrificed their sons and daughters to devils, until God cast them off from being a nation, and sent a heavy punish-

ment upon them, scattering them to the four winds, as ye see them this day, and transferring their privileges to another people—even to us Gentiles, “who were not a people, but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”

The Jews had priority of honour and blessing, chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God, to them pertained “the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.” The stream of electing grace first flowed in Jewish veins, and it was not until the nation filled up the measure of their guilt, that it passed into another family. But does the history of Israel end here? Have they ceased to exist as a separate people, and become incorporated with the Gentile Church? Has the Lord sealed up the vision and prophecy concerning them? This is, or rather has been, the opinion of many. But what does the fact before our eyes teach? We see in the midst of us a dispersed and distinct nation, the only instance of any upon record, which has survived the loss of its civil and religious polity. We are bold to invite the sceptic to account for this

upon natural principles. Where is the man who can trace the history of the extermination of the ten tribes, or follow them to their hiding-place, in which for 2,600 years they have remained in complete obscurity? Many have attempted this, but no one has ever yet given anything approaching to a solution of the difficulty. Who can deny the existence of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin as a distinct people to the present day? They have survived the state of divorce to which the ten tribes have been exposed, and through various vicissitudes have maintained their acknowledged separate but dispersed individuality from the destruction of Jerusalem to the present hour. They survived the captivity in Babylon, the mixture with various nations on their return, their intercourse with the victorious powers of Greece, the persecutions of Antiochus, their subjection to the Romans, and their abasement under the Persians, Saracens, Turks, and Egyptians; yet we see the prophecy fulfilled—"The nation shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." They have rarely intermarried with the strangers among whom they have sojourned; and although separate as the dew among many nations, they have, like the dew, preserved their essential unity. In their language, customs, and religion, they are

essentially Jews—they observe the feasts of the Mosaic ceremonial, and the outward sign of circumcision—they abstain from blood and idolatry, and are zealous for the law—even in their features and physical conformation they exhibit a distinctness of character which stamps them as the nation scattered and peeled, a people terrible from their beginning hitherto, a nation meted out and trodden down. And this is not an arbitrary or groundless assertion, for we can produce the testimony of those who, upon purely natural principles, are obliged to bow before the mystery of Divine agency. A modern physiologist writes thus:—“The Jews exhibit one of the most striking instances of national formation, unaltered by the most various changes; they have been scattered for ages over the face of the whole earth, *but their peculiar religious opinions and practices* have kept them uncommonly pure.” (Lawrence on Physiology, third edition, p. 468.*) So far from its being speculative or uncertain, we have an endless combination of evidence, and the subject demands a close investigation. We ask the question, Why is this? Can it be explained? Is any practical benefit to be derived from the consideration? Assuredly, brethren, for the Holy

* See the remarks of the Rev. H. M'Neile upon this author. (Lecture ii. p. 55; “Lectures upon the Jews.”)

Ghost calls our attention to it, and bids us pause to meditate upon the solemn, personal, and heart-searching truth conveyed in the text. "Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear."

In the present dispersion of Israel we have a living comment upon fulfilled prophecy, an evidence which the most accomplished sceptic cannot gainsay, or the most wilful Atheist deny. God has preserved this monument of his moral government that he may awaken the Church to a sense of her responsibility. He opens a page of deep but plain truth, and he that runs may read; for all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Israel stands as a parenthesis between fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy, and we may trace in what is past, the elements of God's righteousness, while we anticipate the glory which shall follow hereafter. We occupy the position of a pupil who has received his first instructions from the artist. We have the outline, the deep shadows and the first tints of colour and effect, but the painting is left in an unfinished state for a study. Thus the Lord having marked out his great purposes, has placed the Jews as a study upon the earth, directing us by the light of his Word to trace in their history,

past and present, the deep, clear, and masterly outlines of his moral attributes, and thus to anticipate the glorious result when the whole shall be complete.

From this view of the subject we may gather some important lessons. May the Lord graciously teach us, and unfold the truth of his word with demonstration of the Spirit and with power!

The present dispersion affords—

1. A moral warning to the Gentiles.
2. A proof of the literal fulfilment of prophecy.
3. A sure pledge of Israel's return and glory.

1. It is to be feared that much ignorance has prevailed among professing Christians as to the dispersion of Israel, from a neglect of the plain and obvious interpretation of the chapter from which my text is taken. The judicial rejection of Israel, and the ascendancy of the Gentiles, has been regarded with a complacent self-righteous spirit by many; the heart has been puffed up with pride, the mind darkened by prejudice, so that the real, awful, and critical tenure of our privileges in the covenant of election is in a very great degree overlooked. The object of the Epistle to the Romans is to prove, that the justification of a sinner before God is wholly of grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that as regards this article of salvation, Jew and Gentile, who are both

under sin, stand upon equal terms. But the Holy Spirit preserves throughout the Epistle a consistent and striking harmony as to the relative position of these two parties—as individuals and as nations. Thus the apostle in the chapter before us points out the procedure of the covenant, and by the often-used emblem of a tree, marks the source of Israel's fall and the elevation of the Gentile Church. He in a moment of thought carries us back to the call of Israel and their establishment as a nation.—Bringing to mind the description in Psalm lxxx. 8—11, “Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.” By this act of distinguishing grace an insignificant and obscure people were raised to the first place in the scale of mankind, “for the Lord did not set his love upon them or choose them because they were more in number than any people, for they were the fewest of all people, but because the Lord loved them,” and exalted them above all others, “For what nation was there so great who had God so nigh unto them as the Lord God

was in all things that they called upon him for, and what nation was there so great, that had statutes and judgments so righteous, as all the law which God set before them?"* They were fenced around with privileges—nations were destroyed to make room for them—a land flowing with milk and honey was provided for their habitation—the Divine presence was in the midst of them, and nothing could have been done to make them prosperous and happy, that God did not do for them. But there was a certain righteous principle by which their advancement, step by step, was conducted. The Lord was their God, and the method which he adopted towards them was calculated to show that they were entirely dependant upon him. His overflowing grace and rich mercy towards them, demanded a constant exercise of faith in him—just in proportion, therefore, as this principle was in exercise or not the nation prospered or declined. A brief summary will illustrate this position. Abraham "believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he became the friend of God." By faith Isaac and Jacob fulfilled the will of God, while Esau was rejected for unbelief. By faith Moses forsook Egypt, passed through the Red Sea, and led the people into the wilderness. Through faith

* Deut. iv. 7, 8.

Caleb and Joshua entered into the promised land, while the carcasses of the Israelites fell in the wilderness through unbelief. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down. Through unbelief the children of Israel fled before the men of Ai, and the hearts of the people melted and became as water. By faith Joshua feared not the five kings who encamped against Gibeon, for God delivered them into his hand. Through unbelief the tribes of Israel did not utterly drive out the Canaanites, and the Jebusites, and Perizzites from the land, and they were thorns in their sides, and their gods were a snare unto them, and the Lord was wroth against them—and while the nation was punished for unbelief by being subjected to the successive bondage of the King of Mesopotamia, of Sisera, of the King of Midian, and of the Philistines—God reserved a righteous seed who, from time to time, cried unto him, and he delivered them from their distress. In the days of Samuel through unbelief, the people desired a king, saying, “We will have a king that *we may be like all the nations.*” By faith David was raised to the throne, and he prospered. After his death the people forsook God, and we only read of one here and there walking by faith, as in the prophets and some of the kings. In the reign of Jechoniah, the last King of Judah, Jeremiah (xxv. 8—14;

xxix. 10) foretold the captivity in Babylon for seventy years, and their restoration from it at the expiration of that period. The nation rejected this plain testimony, while Daniel and other pious Jews of the captivity laid the prophecy to heart. (Dan. ix. 2—19.) And it is not unreasonable to say, that the prayer of faith was answered in their deliverance from that bondage. But the nation continued in unbelief, which issued in the crucifixion of the Son of God and the dispersion of the people. Lo, they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, therefore, shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy those husbandmen and shall give the vineyard to others. They were broken off for unbelief. *It was a righteous recompense.* But there was a mystery connected with this! Blindness, in part, happened unto Israel. The apostle does not say all the branches, but some of the branches were broken off. The promises were suspended, and they were dispersed as the withered branches of a tree; but the covenant grace continued to flow in Jewish veins, the root remained vigorous as ever, the first-fruits of the Gospel dispensation were Jews. It was only when the nation had filled up the measure of unbelief, that a scion cut out of an olive-tree, which was wild by nature, was grafted contrary to nature into this

olive-stock, and partook of its richness and fatness. Second in point of time, second in point of rank, the Gentile Church derived her spiritual existence and communication of privileges from a Jewish source. *Jesus Christ was a Jew*, the first preachers of the Gospel were all Jews. It was not then a new tree or a new planting, but the grafting of a fruitless scion upon an ancient and fruitful stock. It was not the transplanting of a good olive-tree in the place of an exhausted and degenerate olive-tree, but a wild olive grafted contrary to nature upon a highly favoured olive, which was blighted for a season. And here is the true standing of the Gentile Church. The wall of partition is broken down; “ye who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace who hath made both one.” Both branches exist by the same sap flowing from the same root. The Gentile branch spreads and flourishes, but not to the entire exclusion of the Jewish tree; some of the natural branches are broken off, but the stock remains. “Boast not, then, against the branches. But if thou boast thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.” As then the Gentile Church rears its head above the withered bough of Israel, the moral lesson is inculcated, “Be not highminded, but fear”—the reason is obvious, “thou standest by faith.” Unbelief led to their

dispersion, and unbelief, if you take not good heed, will produce the same results in your case.

Behold, then, the character and attributes of God. "He doeth all things according to his will, and giveth no account of his matters." As sovereign, he calleth whom he will, and none can boast of works or merit before him. "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." "Is there, then, unrighteousness with God? God forbid." All his dispensations are marked by an unerring rule of equity. He lays "judgment to the rule, and righteousness to the plummet." He waiteth to be gracious, and delighteth in mercy. "But he will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life;—but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, for there is no respect of persons." For what has happened unto Israel? "Their own wickedness corrects them, and their backslidings

reprove them;" and we see that "it is an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord God." And should not this affect the professing Christian Church, who have the form of godliness, but who deny the power thereof? As there was a set time for the election of grace for Israel, so is there a set time when the fulness of the election from among the Gentiles will be complete. And how soon that day may come none can tell. Alas, for the unbelief of the present day! the number of true believers is but a handful in comparison of the multitude who go on in ungodliness and sin; and what shall be in the end thereof? Because the Lord holds his peace, men think he is like themselves; but he will certainly avenge himself; yea, his very righteousness obligeth him to do so. He will by no means clear the guilty; though slow to anger, yet he will strike home at last. He will reckon with baptized unbelievers as he reckoned with circumcised unbelievers. He will arise to judgment, and set their sins in order before them. And when they shall say, Peace and safety, sudden destruction shall come upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.

Again,—Who can look at the privileges of Israel, without seeing the heavy responsibility which they involved. But external rites did not necessarily confer inward grace. All were not

Israel who were of Israel. "The election hath obtained, and the rest were blinded unto this day." Circumcision of the flesh was not always accompanied by the circumcision of the spirit, but, contrariwise, the nation was puffed up with the abundance of its mercies, made its boast in the flesh, rested in externals, turned from the lively oracles of God to the traditions of men, and, finally, apostatized in unbelief. And what do we gather from the history of the Church from the day of Pentecost until now? With clearer light and better promises, the Gospel of the kingdom has been preached for a witness among all nations; as many as are ordained to eternal life believe, and enter into rest; and the Lord is adding daily unto the Church such as shall be saved. But external rites and privileges do not necessarily confer spiritual blessings. The election of grace deals with men as individuals, and while whole nations are outwardly baptized into the nominal Church of Christ, a comparatively small number have given evidence of the real regeneration of the Holy Ghost. Nay, the progress of the Church has been marked by an undue and unscriptural attention to externals, which has already led to a direct apostacy in the Romish Church, has almost overwhelmed the oriental Churches in ruin, and I must add, that there are symptoms of the

same spirit in our country, which, if not restrained by the over-ruling hand of God, will inevitably lead to the same result. The declarations of our Lord, the writings of the apostles, and the book of the Revelations, the Gentile book of prophecy, are unanimous in warning the Church against the apostasy of the latter day. For we may be well assured, that as the circumcised branches of Israel were broken off for unbelief, so will the baptized branches be cut off when the set time is come. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Again, we learn the genuine character of that Divine gift which accompanies salvation; "Thou standest by faith." It is this precious grace which connects the soul once and for ever with Jesus, the head and fulness of all blessing, both in time and eternity. It is faith which, as an instrument, applies and appropriates the glorious righteousness and finished salvation of Immanuel. It quickens, justifies, sanctifies, preserves, and glorifies. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Hence it is called, "the faith of the operation of God," "the work of the Holy Ghost," "the mystery of faith," "the faith of

God's elect," and "precious faith." It is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is this grace by which we receive Christ, are united to him, live, move, and have our being in him,—come to him, are built upon him, and abide in him, as branches in the vine. It is faith which opens the heart to the real worth, suitableness, and dignity of Christ. It displays sin in all its naked deformity, and directs at once to the city of refuge, and by this act draws the whole man to him. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." Yes, we behold him who is "fairer than the children of men," who is "full of grace and truth," "the brightness of his Father's glory," "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," "the Lord our Righteousness," the true Prophet, the unchangeable Priest, the universal King, the Lord's anointed, the "chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." How can we value enough the unsearchable riches of Christ, and this unspeakable gift? O remember where your safety lies! Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and *he that believeth* on him shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders dis-

allowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.

You, who have experienced the blessedness of believing, have cause to rejoice in a covenant ordered in all things and sure. But it is an awful consideration for others;—"He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him."

2. The present dispersion is a proof of the literal fulfilment of prophecy.

We have seen that the moral cause of Israel's dispersion was unbelief. They were ignorant of God's righteousness, and went about to establish their own righteousness, whereby they stumbled and fell. We have now to view the dispersion under another aspect; and we shall find that nothing has happened unto them which was not predicted in the Volume of Inspiration. There were two particulars connected with their dispersion which were foretold with a precision which it is impossible to conceive could have been overlooked by any but a people under the ban of a judicial blindness. The first was the person and office and mediation of Messiah; and the second, the Gentile dispensation. But a vail was upon their heart, and they stoutly resisted the literal

interpretation of prophecy as regarded both these points. Thus, by the very circumstance of their rejecting the Scriptures, they were unconsciously the agents for their accomplishment. They overlooked minute predictions in which their highest personal interests were concerned, and rested exclusively upon the glowing promises which applied to the nation. For instance, they overlooked the humiliation and sufferings of Messiah, who by the sacrifice of himself should purchase redemption for his people. Their eyes were blinded; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Again, by discarding the prophecies which distinctly announced the admission of the Gentiles, and their own punishment, they seared their consciences against the threatenings which impended over their nation. They were the children of Abraham, and therefore imagined there could be no break in the absolute lineal enjoyment of the national covenant. I may be describing the state of mind in which many Jews read the Bible at the present hour. They peruse with delight the prophecies which speak of the power and coming of Messiah to restore all things and re-establish the kingdom of David; *but they are partial in the law*—they cancel and obliterate all that concerns the foundation of faith and the first principles of salvation, by the blood and

righteousness of the second Adam. They annihilate all the instruction conveyed by sacrifice and shedding of blood, and with the Scriptures in their hand are witnesses against themselves. Thus their fathers knew not the day of their visitation. They rejected the literal fulfilment of prophecy. They could not conceive that God would accomplish, so exactly and minutely, those predictions which described the "Man of sorrows." Hence a series of distinct but isolated passages, which form a complete history of the person, office, and sufferings of Messiah, were disregarded, and their sin of unbelief and cruelty aggravated by their inconsistency. For the Jews knew well how to value not only the words but the letters of the sacred text, and therefore by slurring over the distinct statements which paint Immanuel's sufferings, they were doubly guilty, and remain so to this day. For it pleased the infinite wisdom of God to concentrate the personal history of Jesus Christ in the most clear and concise statements. A prominence and precision is given to all that concerns the ministry and death of Christ, which nothing but the most literal accomplishment could have met. We find this class of predictions scattered about in a varied connexion, but like diamonds in the midst of other precious stones, they shine with a peculiar lustre, and we cannot but discern,

even in their isolated position, a beautiful harmony and relationship. For instance, we have the place where Messiah shall be born (Micah v. 2), Bethlehem Ephrata—(not Bethlehem of Zabulon, Joshua xix. 15), a passage which was evidently understood literally by the Jews (John vii. 42). The place where he should commence his ministry—(Isaiah ix. 1, 2), the character of his office (Deut. xviii. 15, 18), and the confirmation of it by miracles (Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6; xlii. 7; xxix. 18; xxxii. 3). And when we come to the specific details of his sufferings, there is an accuracy which is truly astonishing. For who would have imagined that a single word uttered by our Saviour on the cross, was the fulfilment of the prophecy in Psalm lxix. 21, “In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink?” or that the fact of our Lord being taken down from the cross without having his legs broken, because he was dead already, should be the fulfilment of a single clause in Psalm xxxiv. 20, “not one of them is broken?” Standing in a connexion which appears to have no reference to the crucifixion of Christ. Who, again, in reading Zech. xii. 10, would discern the Centurion’s spear? who in Isaiah liii. 12, the two malefactors? who in Psalm xvi. 9, 10, the incorruption in the grave? and yet these very passages are referred to as

evidence of the identity of Messiah, and the literal fulfilment of prophecy. See John xix. 24, "The (soldiers) said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that *the Scripture*" (there is but one text to this effect in the whole Bible) "might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots." Again, at verse 28, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." And, again, verses 36, 37, "These things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced." And, lastly, Mark xv. 28, "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, He was numbered with the transgressors." Your memory will supply one or two others equally striking, all converging to the same point, all uniting in Jesus Christ. And what is this but literal fulfilment? The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner, and those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

This is a startling fact, when we survey the large portion of the Bible which prophecy occupies, and

are assured that not one jot or tittle will pass away until all be fulfilled. Is this nothing to the Gentiles? Are the unfulfilled prophecies of no importance to us? If the ground of your argument with a Jew, consist in proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ, you must follow the literal system of interpretation. If you point to the present abased condition of the Jews, and prove from the Scriptures—all this is come upon them because they crucified Messiah, be consistent with yourself, and read those prophecies which belong especially to Gentile apostasy in the Apocalypse of St. John, and the last addresses of our Lord to his disciples. O let us learn to prize the Word of God—every word is of everlasting importance. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away.”

But we may trace the literal fulfilment of prophecies in another class of Scriptures, relating to the dispensation of the Gospel to the Gentiles; and these, too, come under the observation already made, namely, that they are comparatively few in number. They describe the enlarged blessings upon the nations of the earth, when the receiving of the Jew will be as life from the dead to the Gentile. St. Paul styles the admission of the Gentiles *the mystery* which was hid from ages and

generations. This, however, was not from want of light in the Scripture, but from the want of a faithful and literal interpretation of it—from want of light in those who read it. I have time only to select five or six passages which directly and unequivocally point out the admission of the Gentiles during the dispersion of Israel.

The first is in Deut. xxxii. 20, 21. In the 20th verse the Lord denounces their punishment, “I will hide my face from them,” but not for ever, “I will see what their end shall be.” Then in verse 21, “They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.” This passage is quoted by St. Paul in Romans x. 19, to show that God hath not cast away his people entirely.

The second is in Isaiah viii. 14, “He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And *many among* them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and taken.” Here is a break—the great Head of the Church speaks as if in glad anticipation of the ingathering of the

Gentiles, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them I must bring:" for the prophecy proceeds, verse 16, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion." The use which the apostle makes of this passage, in Heb. ii. 13, places the application of it beyond a doubt.

Take, Thirdly, Isaiah xlix. Where we find the Gentiles included in the great charter of salvation—we have the period specified—the acceptable time and the day of salvation, which is the Gentile day—we have the locality—"these from far—these from the north, and these from the land of Sinim," coming to the light of the Gospel. These cannot be Jews, for Zion mourneth, saying, verse 14, "The Lord hath forsaken me and my God hath forgotten me," but promises follow in rich succession. A careful comparison of the latter portion of the chapter with the seventh chapter of Revelation, will show the relative position of Jew and Gentile. Again, in Isaiah lv. 5. In the proclamation of the Gospel, "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that

knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, for he hath glorified thee."

The next is in the following chapter, Isaiah lvi. 8—10, and this is exceedingly interesting, because it embraces the two points,—the dispersion of Israel, and the admission of the Gentiles. "The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him besides those which are gathered unto him." And then follows Israel's depression, "All ye beasts come to devour; yea, all ye beasts in the forest." Here are the Gentile monarchies, and is it without cause? No; "His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant;" they are "like people, like priest." This prepares us for Isaiah lxv. 1, 2: "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." St. Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, interprets this of the Gentiles, while he says unto Israel, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people." * These promises are clear and decisive to us Gentiles; but to a Jew, whose eye was dazzled with the glowing pledges of restitution, triumph, and glory, they were as a sealed book.

* Romans x. 21; ix. 29.

Thus, having fulfilled the Scriptures in crucifying the Lord of glory, they filled up the measure of their iniquity by consigning the whole Gentile world to eternal ruin and misery; as, the apostle states, “Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway (*παντοτε*): for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” * They shut up the gate of heaven, and would neither enter themselves, nor suffer others to enter in. They judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles. We may imagine something parallel to this in the case of an executor to a will, in which certain legacies are devised to strangers. Being related to the deceased, and jealous for the rights of *his family*, he disputes the will, explains away the few sentences in which the bequests are contained, argues, from the other provisions of the will, that it was not in the mind of the testator, and withholds the payment. Thus the estate is involved in difficulties, and the benefits to the family are suspended. In like manner the people of Israel had the covenant; but, by rejecting the provisions of it, and falling

* 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

into a carnal self-righteous spirit, withholding the mercy of God from the Gentiles, and giving them over to a state of hopeless alienation, they brought down upon themselves the just and predicted vengeance of heaven, and were scattered to the four winds (which had not happened before), until as many as the Lord should call from among the Gentiles to accomplish the number of his elect should be gathered out. And this opens at once the medium through which we view the present dispersion. Israel was weighed in the balances and found wanting. They rejected the counsel of God, against themselves. The floodgates of wrath were let loose upon them, and the most literal, exact, and unquestionable fulfilment of prophecy has taken place. Let any careful student compare the modern history of that nation, since the destruction of Jerusalem, with the ancient prophecies, delivered at least 1500 years before that event, giving honestly and fairly to each passage its grammatical sense, and I hesitate not to say, he will pronounce the latter to be infinitely the most touching, exact, and beautiful. Read the summary in Leviticus xxvi. and although much of it may apply to the Babylonish and Assyrian captivity, yet is its clear and full import only applicable to these latter times. God has walked contrary to them in fury, and

chastised them seven times for their sins. He has made their cities waste, and brought their sanctuaries unto desolation, and has not smelt the savour of their sweet odours. He has brought the land into desolation, and their enemies which dwell therein are astonished at it. They are scattered among the heathen, and the sword has pursued them: the land enjoys her Sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and the Jews are in their enemies' land; the sound of a shaken leaf chases them; alas! they are oppressed, they are fallen. The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music,—the joy of their heart is ceased, their dance is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from their head. Woe unto them, for they have sinned.

I might enlarge, but, as illustration of fulfilled prophecy belongs more properly to our next head, I proceed,

III. To show that the present dispersion is a sure pledge of the future restoration and glory of Israel.

The prophecies respecting Israel consist of curses and blessings; and the character of each is distinguished by an attention to the most minute particulars. We see the one literally fulfilled before our eyes. What is to be said of the other? Have the blessings been as literally accomplished?

Can any one fairly say that all the blessings promised, in Isaiah, for instance, began to be accomplished in the return from Babylon, and have continued their spiritual fulfilment since the coming of Jesus Christ, and the admission of the Gentiles. A few moments' consideration will, I think, suffice to show that such a supposition is wholly untenable. If, then, we admit that the threatenings have been literally fulfilled, then is it a sure pledge that the blessings will be fulfilled also.

For, by a comparison with curses fulfilled upon other nations, we can draw no other conclusion. Several chapters, and one whole book of the prophets, are occupied with threatenings against Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, and Sidon. And none can hesitate as to their most literal accomplishment. The besom of destruction has swept them away. And their names, except as symbols or beacons for our warning, are almost forgotten. But not so with Jerusalem. Her name and nation remain. We see the prophecy fulfilled in her downfall, but this only proves that she is to rise again; and the reason is obvious, because Babylon, Nineveh, and Tyre were the enemies of Israel, and were the hammer in the Lord's hand, to bring about her dispersion, but their destruction is actually connected with, and a pledge of, her restoration. In Jer. L. 17, 21,

“Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away; first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, hath broken his bones. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.” Here we may observe,—

First, That Babylon and Nineveh should be destroyed, because of their cruelty to Israel, and consequently are a token and earnest of God’s care and love for his chosen people.

Secondly, That the *restoration and pardon* of Israel and Judah are connected, and none can say it has been yet accomplished.

But this will be still more plain by a reference to one or two other prophecies. It is nowhere intimated that Nineveh shall be rebuilt, or Babylon restored, or that Tyre shall again become the city of merchants. On the contrary, they are to be an eternal desolation and a perpetual hissing, and

shall no more be inhabited for ever. We read, indeed, of their posterity, a remnant scattered in other countries, who shall come with an offering and a gift to the people of the Lord of hosts, when the Jews are restored to Jerusalem. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. The daughter of Tyre shall be there: her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord; it shall not be treasured nor laid up: for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently and for durable clothing." "And the Assyrian and the Egyptian shall serve together. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of mine hands, and Israel MINE INHERITANCE."* And what is this, but a pledge of God's unchanging love to Israel? Her enemies shall be destroyed, and brought under her subjection; they shall never rise up against her, for she shall tread upon their high places. But while we peruse in the Word of God and in the book of Providence the overthrow of Israel's enemies, we nowhere read of Israel's extermination. See the tender mercy of Jehovah, yearning over the dispersion.

* Ps. lxxii. 10; Is. xxiii. 18; xix. 25.

“Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.”* “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger; I will not return to destroy Ephraim.”† But of Nineveh he saith, “He shall make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.”‡

But again, the curses against Israel are always accompanied by mercy. The promise follows in the train of judgment. It is second in point of time, therefore it would be unreasonable to expect the blessing could be fulfilled unless its forerunner had prepared the way before it. This is a very affecting but a most encouraging view to take of Israel's present condition, and one which is constantly used as an argument by the Jews themselves. How literally have curses been in-

* Isaiah xxvii. 7—9.

† Hosea xi. 8.

‡ Nahum i. 9.

flicted—take one or two instances, “The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.”* In these two verses we have the curse and the blessing opposed. Have either or both parts of this prophecy been accomplished? Seven hundred years ago the Rabbi David Kimchi said, “These are the days of the captivity in which we now are, and we have no king and no prince of the stock of Israel, for we are under the dominion of the Gentiles and that of their kings and their princes,” and this observation is borne out by the fact that ever since they rejected their king by the crucifixion of Jesus, they have remained without a national throne or national sceptre. And with their civil privileges they have lost their religious privileges—for they have neither sacrifice nor mediation, they worship God ignorantly, and yet they have not fallen back into open idolatry—as is strikingly shown by their treatment of the Roman Catholic doctrines wherever they have been presented to them. They have remained without a priest to minister

* Hosea iii. 4, 5.

whether for sacred worship or idol worship; when the sacrifice ceased the priesthood ceased; and although they have their rabbies, yet no priest of the family of Aaron—none wear the ephod or teraphim. Thus neither protected by the ordinance of kingly government nor sanctified by the service of the house of God—having no real access to God the Father, and without priest or prophet to instruct them, they are literally fulfilling the Scripture,—but does not this afford a sure pledge that the latter verse shall be accomplished in their return and establishment as a kingdom under the true David, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end? Now this is a plain prediction, and we cannot by any spiritual interpretation transpose the order of it or show the fulfilment. And the conclusion naturally follows, that the first having been accomplished, is a pledge of the second?

But to take another illustration from the actual state of the two capital cities of Judah and Israel, and we have a similar proof.

1st, Samaria. The Prophet Micah, chap. i. 6, “Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof.”

2d, Jerusalem. Chap. iii. 12, “Therefore shall

Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."

How exactly these two predictions have been fulfilled I can testify from personal observation. The hill upon which Samaria once stood retains no traces of the ancient city. There is a ruin of a Christian Church built by the Crusaders, and several columns of ancient temples, probably of the time of Greek or Roman dominion, but not a stone of ancient Samaria, the foundations are literally dug up, but on either side of the hill and in the valley are great stones rolled about in confusion amid the olive-gardens, which form the chief production of the soil. But the rich vineyards are ploughed up, and the neighbouring mountains present externally a barren, because uncultivated appearance. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture, "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and eat them as common things."* And in Amos ix. 14, "And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and

* Jer. xxxi. 4, 5.

they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them." And is anything too hard for the Lord?

But take the other prophecy of Jerusalem, her predicted overthrow, her present miserable condition. Who has not read of Jerusalem being a heap of rubbish—a city of desolation—infected with plague—steeped with the blood of millions—and yet exhibiting evidences of identity, which it is impossible to deny with the Scriptures in your hand. For instance. When you walk about modern Zion, and go round about her, and mark well her bulwarks, your eye is continually attracted by certain white stones which have been used from time to time in the rude masonry of the walls and buildings, but more particularly in that part of the city which lies contiguous to the site of Solomon's temple; upon a careful examination of them and comparison with a portion of the foundation wall which is supposed to have been laid by Herod, you are forced to the conclusion that they are indeed the goodly stones of the ancient temple. And when you turn to Lamentations iv. 1, you read, "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street." And if you turn to Psalm cii. 13, another Scrip-

ture saith, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof..... When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory."* He hath not forgotten the city where his honour dwelleth. Her walls are continually before him. "For in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it."† "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows with agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."‡

If, then, we see such minute attention to these details of fulfilled prophecy, can we imagine that God will be less minute in the accomplishment of what remains. If he has performed what is comparatively the lesser, shall he not much more accomplish what is larger and fuller, because he delighteth in mercy.

But, again, So far from the end of Israel

* Psalm cii. 13. 16.

† Micah iv. 1, 2.

‡ Isaiah liv. 11.

being a state of judicial apostasy, the end of Israel is blessing. This forms the bulk of the prophetic writings. Blessings in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Blessings by the mouth of David and all the prophets. Blessings by New Testament Prophets, Zacharias and Simeon. Yea, and by our Lord himself, in whom all the seed of Israel shall be justified and shall glory. Wherever servitude or punishment is foretold, there is a chronological limit affixed to it. As with Abraham. His seed were to be in servitude 430 years. So with Judah, the Babylonish captivity was to last for seventy years. So with Israel, from the time of their bondage to their deliverance, a "seven times," or about 2,500 years. The most exact register is kept of the day and hour when their troubles begin, and when they shall end, but where is the limit to their glory? Their kingdom, and dominion, and glory shall be established for ever and ever, they shall not be moved again world without end. Have we not seen some of these specified periods clearly and distinctly terminated? have we not stirring evidence around us as to the termination of another period? And what is this but a pledge of returning mercy to Jerusalem.

But, further, the course pursued by the Lord towards Israel is exactly that which is suited to

prepare the way for their return to him. "Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the Lord. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be in that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi (my husband); and shalt no more call me Baali" (my lord).* They shall accept the punishment of their iniquity, and although not in a truly converted state, yet their proud hearts shall be humbled, and they shall acknowledge that the Lord hath walked contrary unto them, and they shall remember the Lord afar off, and Jerusalem shall come into their mind. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after

* Hosea ii. 6, 13—16.

that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.”* Here every step in the process of return is noted; first, a turning; then a sense of sorrow and acknowledgment of sin; then instruction; then deep, godly, and genuine contrition, as in Ezekiel xvi. 63. But I must not enlarge.

I have one argument before I close. The admission of the Gentiles being the fulfilment of prophecy is a sure pledge of Israel's return; first, because the stranger nation is intended to provoke Israel to jealousy, and thus bring about a moral revolution; and secondly, because the riches and power and influence of the Gentiles shall be actually employed in their literal restoration. “Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified

* Jer. xxxi. 18—21.

thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.”* And, oh! what an appeal does this make to that portion of the Jewish nation who are absorbed in worldly gain, and fixing their interests more entirely in lands not their own. We do not read of Joseph or his brethren petitioning the Court of Pharaoh to be admitted to high office in the state; on the contrary, Joseph was raised by the overruling providence of God to effect a special purpose, but would not allow his bones to remain out of the land of promise, and the people were an abomination to the Egyptians by reason of their separate habits. The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; but now, Joseph’s posterity seek for their advancement, from the world. We do not read of Daniel, Mishael, and Azariah, seeking preferment in Nebuchadnezzar’s government; they refused to defile themselves with the king’s meat, or to obey the king’s command to worship the golden image—their eye was fixed upon Jerusalem, and they were never so happy as when they were looking towards the holy temple. How then can the modern Jew who really reads and prizes

* Is. lx. 9, 10.

the sacred Scriptures, and who rests for his hope upon the covenant with Abraham—how can he sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Must not his heart beat high for his beloved land—the land of his forefathers—the land his by Divine covenant, gift, and conquest? Surely, it were pandering to the low grovelling feelings of our nature, to suppose that toleration under a Gentile monarchy will compensate for the glories of restored Israel.

Then let us pray our brother home. He lies by the way side wounded, robbed, half dead; the priest and Levite pity not; but, oh! may our bowels of compassion be moved to pray for his recovery and restitution. A heavy debt of injustice stands against us; but, brethren, we stand as Englishmen in a blessed and threefold relation to Christ.

1. We have sworn, that the Lord shall be our God, and that by a solemn and national covenant.

2. We have sealed this testimony by the maintenance of a national standard of truth, and by an uncompromising opposition to Antichristian principles, so that our land has been made a field of blood for the cause of truth.

3. We are apparently marked by Divine Providence as the nation which is to be especially

honoured in spreading the Gospel throughout the world and of restoring Israel to their own land. And, oh, that we might act up to our high and unspeakable privileges. The Jews had the morning of the covenant, but they would not pay the rent of the vineyard to Christ. We have the evening of it, and what a mercy it is, that "Our beloved feedeth amongst the lilies until the day break and the shadows flee away." We shall shortly give in the account of our stewardship as a nation and as individuals.

LECTURE VIII.

THE RECOVERY OF JERUSALEM FROM ITS LONG
DESOLATION, AND THE RESTORATION OF
JUDAH AND ISRAEL TO THE LAND
OF CANAAN, IN CONNEXION
WITH THEIR CONVERSION.

BY THE REV. E. BICKERSTETH,
RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

JEREMIAH XXXI. 6—9.

“Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them, and

they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it."

THE restoration and the future glory of Israel is the haven set before the Church in all the Old Testament prophecies, amidst the dark and stormy scenes of the last days. It is the citadel of its hope in the times of affliction. This subject occupies a very large proportion of the Word of God. The restoration of Israel is the fountain-head also of innumerable blessings to the whole world. Well, then, does it become the ministers of God's Word, prominently and distinctly to direct the attention of men to it, and to open out its reality and its glories.

We find this great and important event, which is yet to come, presented to us in the most rich variety of forms, and with special beauty, in seasons of trial and danger. It is so in the glowing prophecy of our text. Jeremiah was shut up in the court of the prison; the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah were thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword of the Chaldeans. When the Jews went forth to fight with them, it was but to fill the places with the dead bodies of men. Jerusalem was sentenced of God to fall. (Jer. xxxii. 28, 29.)

In this dark and gloomy season, the Lord gives one of the fullest and most glowing prophecies in the Old Testament. So it is ever. This is the way of our gracious God. *To the upright there ariseth light in darkness.* The hour of temptation to the world is the time of redemption to the Church.

The beloved brother, to whom the subject of my lecture this evening had originally been assigned, having preached two sermons upon it, full of important instruction, in the lectures recently delivered at Liverpool, requested me to take it, transferring the one on the unchangeableness of Israel's election to him. I trust that a gracious Providence has over-ruled every step in our present course of lectures, for the farther illustration of God's truth. To his name be glory. I cannot here, also, but, as an elder brother in the ministry, testify my joy that God has disposed so many of my brethren at Liverpool in the close of last year, and so many in this course of lectures in London, to unite thus in showing their common interest in the future welfare of Israel. Thanks be to our God who has put this into our hearts, and thus brought before the Church another token that *the time to favour Zion is come.*

Our whole subject is eminently one of faith, and not of mere argument. Its foundation is in the

Word of God, and not in the wisdom of man. It is one that has to encounter, therefore, the scorn of the unbeliever, and we must look for this. We believe *in God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.* God's Word is to us the only, and the all-sufficient warrant of our faith. Knowing this, and I, having a part yet wholly future assigned to me, you will chiefly expect from me to know what the Scriptures say. Receive what I bring forward only as I bring clear Scripture testimony, but let us fully believe every jot and every tittle of God's Word, knowing that the Scriptures cannot be broken.

It may be well to strengthen my explanation of my text, by the remark of the late venerable Mr. Simeon. Introducing his discourse upon it, he says, "The more fully the subject of the restoration and conversion of the Jews is considered, the more important it will appear. The prophetic writings are full of it, and the obscurity of those writings arises in a great measure from the gross perversion of them, of which even pious ministers have been guilty through a long succession of ages. Those whose office has been to interpret them, have almost universally applied them spiritually to the Gentiles; overlooking the plain literal meaning of them as addressed to the Jewish people, and by this means not only has the attention of the

Christian world been drawn from the Jews, but it has been drawn also even from the prophecies themselves, because of the impenetrable veil that has been cast over them. That the passage before us relates to that subject, no one can entertain a doubt. And that it has never yet been fulfilled, is equally clear." Thus is the passage of my text commended to us by our departed friend.

O may the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, graciously pour out his own blessed Spirit upon us, and guide us into all truth ! As we have no wisdom herein of our own, but only the wisdom of God's holy word, so we have no eyes to discern his truth, but as he himself opens the eyes of our understanding. The words of our text suggest three things for your consideration.

I. The objects of the prophecy.

II. The blessings promised.

III. The glorious results which will follow.

I. THE OBJECTS OF THE PROPHECY.

They are distinctly brought before us by three well-defined titles, *Jerusalem*, *Judah*, and *Israel*. Each must be separately viewed, that we may discern the fulness of the prophecy.

1. JERUSALEM. *Behold, I will bring it health.*

The immediate antecedent is this city, the city of Jerusalem, then besieged by the Chaldeans.

Trace rapidly its peculiar history.

(1.) GOD'S PAST CHOICE OF JERUSALEM. In the mysterious history of Melchizedek, King of Salem, nearly two thousand years before the birth of Christ, Jerusalem is first brought before us. It was then under the dominion of the priest of the Most High God, and the King of Righteousness, the type and emblem of its yet future glorious King, our Lord Jesus Christ. Jerusalem soon lost this glory, and though Adoni-zedec, the heathen king of Jerusalem, was slain by Joshua, it became the stronghold of the Jebusites: who still dwelt with the children of Benjamin in this city (Judges i. 21), and afterwards took entire possession of it (Judges xix. 10). Thus it was the last stronghold in the Holy Land possessed by the Canaanites, and it was not completely subdued till the ten tribes had anointed David king over all Israel. The Jebusites then mocked David with the scornful insinuation, that the lame and the blind could defend the stronghold of Zion against its true king; this mockery brought on their overthrow and the complete triumph of David. Yet afterwards Araunah the Jebusite freely gave a place for an altar where the temple was to be built

(1 Chron. xxii.), thus furnishing an earnest of that large bounty the Gentiles shall hereafter show to this city. (Isaiah lx. 9.)

Jerusalem was, indeed, in God's mind from the beginning. Before the Israelites took possession of the land, he mentioned it to Moses thus, *Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither shalt thou come.* Their tithes for the poor were to be eaten there, *Before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.* (Deut. xii. 5, 11, 18, 26.) When Solomon, therefore, dedicated the temple just one thousand years before Christ, he reminded Israel that God had said, *I have chosen Jerusalem that my name might be there, and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.* (2 Chron. vi. 6.)

Hence even when through Solomon's idolatry the kingdom was divided, God still referred to his choice of this city, *David my servant shall have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.* (1 Kings ii. 36.) It is often noticed in the Psalms, that

the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. (Psalm cxxxii. 13; lxxviii. 6, 8.)

After another thousand years had passed away, when our Lord himself came to Jerusalem, and was rejected by the Jews; but in his opening sermon on the mount, he asserted and confirmed the dignity of this chosen place, styling it *the city of the Great King*. He made it for ever memorable by dying, rising again, and ascending to heaven at this place. Thus for two thousand years Jerusalem was marked out as the city of God's choice, and at length the stupendous sacrifice of incarnate Deity, was there offered up to God.

ITS LONG DESOLATION must be further noticed. When the true King of Zion came, notwithstanding all his mighty miracles, heavenly wisdom, and spotless holiness, he was disowned and rejected. *They denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them, and killed the Prince of Life.* Then according to the prediction of our Lord, *their house was left unto them desolate*, and Jerusalem has been ever since trodden down of the Gentiles.

After another thousand years had passed away, in the memorable crusades, Jerusalem became an object of intense interest to all the four quarters of the great scene of prophecy. We see Franks from the west, Normans from the north, Turks

from the east, and Saracens from the south, waging war for the possession of the Holy City, according to the predictions of the sixth trumpet, Rev. ix.

But still Jerusalem continued to be trodden down, and is still *trodden down of the Gentiles*, and will be so *till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*. The Prophet Micah foretold this, saying (iii. 12), *Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field; and Jerusalem shall become heaps; and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.*

The grand cause of this desolation is explicitly stated by our Lord. When the husbandmen slew the son of the lord of the vineyard, they brought destruction upon themselves. (Matt. xxi. 37—41.) When the servants sent to invite the guests to the marriage feast were slain, *the king sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.* (Matt. xxii. 6, 7.) It was the persevering rejection of Christ, joined to the opposition which they made to the Gospel's being sent to the Gentiles (1 Thess. ii. 16), that brought these fearful judgments on the Jews.

But our Lord expressly limits their continuance to a certain period, the close of which is marked by the completing of the times of the Gentiles, and his welcomed return in glory. (Luke xxi. 24; Matt. xxiii. 39; xxiv. 30.) Till that time their

temple is desolate, and their city is trodden down; but then they are restored, and the glory returns to Zion.

ITS FUTURE RECOVERY is as distinctly predicted and revealed in the Holy Scriptures as its present desolation. The testimonies of the Holy Ghost to this recovery are very numerous.

It is to be restored **LOCALLY**, Zech. xii. 10: *Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.* Jer. xxxi. 16: *The city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.* (So ver. 38—40.)

It is to be restored **POLITICALLY**, Isaiah i. 26, 27: *I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.*

It is to be restored **SPIRITUALLY**, Jer. xxxiii. 15, 16: *In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.*

It is to be restored **GLORIOUSLY**. How full the sixtieth of Isaiah is of this glory! Take one or

two expressions. *The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious..... they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.* God himself thus further describes it in Ezek. xliii. 7, *The place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever.* In its future restored state, the name of the city from that day shall be, *The Lord is there*; its highest and its everlasting glory is, that our Lord Jesus Christ there manifests his glory. It is to be the city of the great King of the whole earth, the metropolis of the nations, and the centre of God's visible kingdom here below (Isaiah lx.), *for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

JUDAH is another object of this prophecy. Judah comprehends the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah. On the schism of Jeroboam, and under the common sins of both Judah and Israel, the ten tribes were severed from the two. Judah maintained longest the pure worship of God, and was longest spared from those judgments which sin brought on the land. Judah was also partially restored after the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, as Jeremiah had predicted. By this

reviving in the bondage under the Gentile kingdoms, God again tried and proved his people, marked the distinctness of that tribe from which our Lord was to spring, accomplished his prediction *of the sceptre not departing from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet till Shiloh come*, (Gen. xlix. 10,) and secured all the unspeakable mercies of our redemption. The restoration from Babylon was but a partial and temporary return even of Judah, for a period at the most of 600 years, and those years often full of difficulties, oppressions, and arduous conflicts. Ezra's words are plain to this effect: *Now for a little space grace hath been showed to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.* (ix. 8.) Nehemiah's description is similar, (ix. 34—36,) and St. James considers the twelve tribes as even in his day scattered abroad, (ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ.) Hence, Zechariah, who prophesied after the restoration, explicitly predicts the future salvation and glories of Judah: *I will make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first.* We have a similar prophecy distinctly referring to a future salvation of Judah in Joel, iii. 20, 21: *But*

Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation, for I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Zion. Besides the results of Judah's temporary and partial restoration which have already been noticed, God has so wonderfully in his providence overruled all things, and grace has so abounded over sin, that all their conduct in rejecting Christ, and all their sufferings for it, have become a deep and enduring means for the bringing forth hereafter all the full and abundant spiritual fruit in them, which shall yet glorify God and benefit the whole world, at their future and glorious final redemption.

Dispersed then as Judah now is, east and west, north and south, through the whole earth, Judah in its distinctness is yet an object of glorious hope and promise, and by its preserved distinctness, a larger foundation is laid for the more clear and exact fulfilment of the restoration of the whole nation.

ISRAEL is a third object here brought before us; that which is elsewhere emphatically called *Joseph, Ephraim, and all the house of Israel his companions*, in contrast with *Judah, and the children of Israel his companions*. (Ezek. xxxvii. 19.) The combining of the return of the captivity of Israel with that of Judah, clearly excepts this prophecy

from an accomplishment in either of them at the return from Babylon, for then only Judah and Benjamin were partially restored. (Ezra i. 5. 4. 1.) It is admitted in any case, that only partial fragments of the ten tribes came back with Judah from Babylon.

In Hosea the Lord thus speaks concerning Israel: *Thou shalt abide for me MANY DAYS; (observe the lengthened time); thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee. For the children of Israel shall abide MANY DAYS without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in THE LATTER DAYS;* observe again, the clear note of time as to the prolonged delay in fulfilment—they are to abide separately and as outcasts for a lengthened period, but are not wholly, not finally cast off.

It is true that Israel has been greatly hidden from our eyes, unknown and in darkness; the prophecy has yet to be fulfilled when the Redeemer shall say to them *that are in darkness, Show yourselves.* (Is. xlix. 5.) But already many genuine parts of the ten tribes are beginning

to show themselves through the East: it is becoming more and more clear that remnants still exist in Persia, and on the borders of the Caspian. They will in due time all be brought forth, even as from their graves, as Ezekiel predicts, and at their restoration be united again with Judah, and made one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel. The envy between Judah and Ephraim is, as Isaiah predicts, for ever to cease. (xi. 13.) They are, as Jeremiah foretells, to resort to Jerusalem for worship. *The watchman upon Mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God. . . . Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. . . . they shall come and sing together in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord.* (Jer. xxxi. 6—12.)

The lengthened dispersion, the very loss of them from all our knowledge, their being so long hidden in darkness, and the degradation of their present state, will heighten their future joy and glory.

What triumphs of grace will this restoration and this reunion be in the face of the whole earth! What a recovery, revival, and unutterable increase of former glories and blessings! And,

O, what a monarch is yet to *sit on the throne of David, and to reign over the house of Jacob for ever.* (Luke i. 32, 33.) How emphatically will it then be said by all, *a greater than Solomon is here!*

II. THE BLESSINGS PROMISED.

They are very full and comprehensive, and must be viewed as the results arrived at after God's previous dealings with them.

I do not here, as it is neither in my text nor in the immediate subject of my lecture, enter upon the preparatory steps and that commenced restoration and rebuilding of the temple in self-righteousness (Is. lxvi.) which are brought before us in other parts of the prophecies. This more properly belongs to a beloved brother, who will have to treat of the last tribulation of the Jews before the advent of the Messiah. I will merely observe, that the Scriptures have given plain intimations, that a partial restoration to their own land precedes their conversion and sanctification. Thus Ezekiel predicts: *I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. THEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.* (Ezek. xxxvi. 25; so xxxvii. 8—18.)

Nor shall I dwell on the miracles attending

their subsequent glorious restoration, for the same reasons. This belongs to my dear brother who follows me. It meets all the apparent difficulties with the full assurance, that *what God has promised he is able also to perform*. A miraculous dispensation has always been the characteristic of this nation. Every thing for 4,000 years about Abraham and his seed, including their existence in distinctness for the last 1,800 years, has been one grand miracle of Divine interposition, assuring us of the final accomplishment of all that is yet unfulfilled.

Most rich are the blessings which God in our text has promised—THE HEALTH AND CURE OF JERUSALEM—*Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them*.

Many passages of God's Word show us the diseased, sick, and degraded state of Jerusalem, and the Jews, in times past. (Isaiah i. 5—7, 21—23; Jer. v. 5. 31.) The prophecy of Malachi shows the same national sinfulness on their restoration from Babylon, and the New Testament exhibits their continued fallen state after our Lord had come. (Rom. xi. 9, 10; Acts xxviii. 26, 27.) The prophets describe also (in a prediction manifestly yet unfulfilled, Is. lxvi.) their rebuilding their temple at their yet future restoration in self-righteousness, and God giving

them this solemn warning: *Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions and will bring their fears upon them.* The way in which health and cure is brought to them, is compared to the way in which the precious metals are refined, *I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried.* (Zech. xiii. 9.) The healing and curing of such a lengthened and inveterate disease is painful and progressive: *I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant, and I will purge out from among you the rebels.* (Ezek. xxx. 7, 8.) This healing and cure will effectually restore the Jews to all the vigour and energy and full blessedness of a healthy state. It will include political welfare, social happiness, and spiritual prosperity. There can be no full health and cure to Jerusalem which does not include these diffused blessings.

PEACE AND TRUTH in abundance are also promised—*I will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.* Hitherto, in every land the Jews have been emphatically disquieted and troubled. That prediction has been openly fulfilled: *Among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest:*

but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. (Deut. xxviii. 65.) And above all, true peace of conscience is unattainable to a Jew rejecting Christ. There is no possible way of peace to an afflicted conscience but in the way of God's appointment, through faith in his Son our Lord Jesus Christ. No rabbi of Israel can discover the way of peace to a distressed and burdened Jew. By their banishment from Judea, they are precluded from the appointed sacrifices of God's own holy law, which they still hold; and by unbelief in Christ they are shut out from the true substance of those sacrifices. No awakened and devout Jew, while he keeps from Christ Jesus, can have solid peace. In the place of this disquietude, within and without, God here promises to them genuine peace—the peace of God which passes all understanding, under Jesus the Prince of Peace. He promises, also, entire deliverance from all Gentile oppression and violence: *Violence shall be no more heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders.* (Is. lx. 18.)

And with peace, TRUTH. Oh happy conjunction! How often are they separated in our thoughts and in our present condition! God here brings them together in Jerusalem's happiness. Now God's truth is wonderfully hidden from

Jerusalem. It seems a centre in which all conflicting sentiments meet together. The Apostle Paul declares respecting the Jews, *For until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament, which vail is done away in Christ, but even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.* Yet is the truth reappearing at Jerusalem. The Word of God is again made known. The prayers of our beautiful Liturgy, concentrating the confessed truth and devotion of eighteen centuries, are now offering up on Mount Zion. Jerusalem shall yet be full of those Jews, who shall know that there is in Christ the substance of all those types and shadows in which they are now resting. The whole truth shall at length be revealed to them, and our Lord's words to his disciples be realized to the nation, *Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* They shall first receive the truth in their own hearts, and then experience the faithfulness of God, in the fulfilment of all his promises.

These blessings are to be given IN ABUNDANCE. God would exclude doubt by the strength of his testimony. The Jews, from their large acquaintance with the law of God, will probably discover the fulness of its testimony to Christ, and the import of all its heavenly patterns, to an extent that we

Gentiles have not yet attained. The literal exactness of the fulfilment will be such as to justify the term, *abundance of truth*. How clear, then, is it that the restoration from Babylon did not, how clear is it no mere conversion of individuals can fulfil this prediction of Jerusalem's health. Is it the abundance of truth on God's part to fulfil the promises of threatening, and not of repentance? Is it the abundance of truth to fulfil the promises of repentance, and not of restoration? Is it the abundance of truth to fulfil the promises of restoration, and not of glory? All the prophecies respecting the actual dispersion of the Jews, and the evils they have endured, and those relating to the birth, and the miracles, and the sufferings, and the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, have been literally fulfilled; we gather hence an irresistible conclusion, that all those which remain to be fulfilled, will also be literally fulfilled. As certainly as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were real persons, and the promises made to them real promises; as certainly as, according to the testimony of St. Paul, *Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers* (Romans xv. 8), so certainly may we expect the real and exact fulfilment of these promises to the literal Jerusalem.

When a mighty conqueror gains possession of

the capital of a kingdom, it is an earnest of the speedy triumph over the whole kingdom. Jerusalem's blessedness comes first, under the deliverance of Him who goes forth *conquering and to conquer*, and then that of Judah and Israel.

RESTORATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WHOLE NATION are then promised. *I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them as at the first.* We have here a complete restoration of Israel as well as of Judah, and we have its fulness and permanence in their firm and enduring establishment promised. It is clear in the face of the whole world that Israel, in captivity when this prophecy was delivered, has never since been restored and built as at the first. It seems as if the Holy Ghost were careful by the explicitness and fulness of the promises, to guard against any doubts respecting the future restoration.

The dear brother who preceded me has, I doubt not, fully shown that the restoration of Judah and Benjamin from Babylon was no fulfilment of the many predictions which relate to the completed restoration of the whole nation from all lands: that of Israel but a few companions came back, and that even of Judah but a remnant was restored. The predictions, like that of our text, are numerous (Isaiah xi. 11, 12; Jer. iii. 18; xvi. 14, 15;

xxx. 3, 10; xxxi. 31; Ezek. xxxvii.). All those perversions by which our minds might be led only to regard the partial restoration from Babylon, or only a conversion of the *remnant according to the election of grace*, are guarded against by a repetition of statement almost to tautology, in order to preserve us from unbelief. Thus (Ezek. xx. 40), *In mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me.* So Amos ix. 15, *They shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.* This is farther strengthened by the prediction of Malachi, the last of the prophets, and who lived and prophesied after the restoration of Judah. *All nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.* (Mal. iii. 12.) And all this is confirmed by the answer of our Lord to the last question of his disciples, *The Father hath reserved the times and seasons of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel in his own power.* (Acts i. 8.)

I will build them as at the first. Never have Israel and Judah thus been built together since Israel was carried captive into Babylon. Where have been the miraculous dealings since then, which have corresponded to the plagues of Egypt,

the opening of a channel in the Red Sea, the feeding with manna, the fall of Jericho, the standing still of the sun and of the moon, connected with their first being built into a nation, or where the united glories of the whole land as in the reign of Solomon?

Surely if any future event is plainly revealed, the literal restoration of the Jewish nation to their own land is clearly revealed. If the Word of God be the warrant of all faith and hope in what is to come, then have we full warrant to expect this. For my part, my brethren, I confess before you, I believe with simplicity what God has, as it seems to me, plainly spoken on this matter, and I look forward to it as an event yet to come with perfect and entire assurance. I call you also as Jehoshaphat called the Jews of old, *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.* (2 Chron. xx. 20.)

PARDON AND HOLINESS to the whole nation are farther blessings here promised. *And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.*

This is the source and this is the crown of all the other blessings. This meets the deepest and the most urgent of all a sinner's wants. This

takes all the promises out of the form of a conditional covenant, dependant on man's faithfulness, and places them upon the immoveable basis of God's grace and truth.

We have here the two chief wants, the two great and most irremediable wants of men and of nations, their guilt and their pollution through sin, effectually provided for by the God of all grace. This is one of many similar assurances of his love to Israel. How strong, for instance, are the Divine expressions of grace to them! *In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.* (Isaiah l. 20.) And again, *Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.* (Micah vii. 19.)

It is indeed true that the Jews in rejecting Christ, and opposing the preaching of his Gospel to the Gentiles, have most awfully sinned against God. But here is the Divine assurance of forgiveness. The full chorus of all those triumphant songs of prophecy, poured forth in the richest strains of melody, by the glowing inspiration given to Isaiah, first breaks forth upon our ears in its heart-gladdening repetitions thus,—*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that*

her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. So in our text there is a repetition, an accumulation of expressions, and a fulness of statement, as if the Lord would dispel every doubt, and leave no room for mistake. The *all* is twice repeated; the *against me* twice repeated; the expressions showing their sinfulness are five times repeated, and all are covered and removed with pardon and cleansing; thus every desponding feeling is met, and full warrant given, notwithstanding all their aggravated and lengthened sins, for returning to God in entire confidence. Oh, what a Father's yearning heart of full love God has to his people, that above two thousand years since he should lay up this treasure of comfort for them!

But when will these things take place? The spiritual benefits of the promise are obtained by the believer in Jesus already. *Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you, the forgiveness of sin, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* It is for you, and for me, and for all who will now come to Christ. We lose no spiritual blessing of the Old Testament by believing the literal application to Israel. Come,

then, now to Jesus, and we too shall find rest for our souls.

If you yet farther ask when shall these things be realized in the literal Israel, through their also saying, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?* I reply, a certainty as to the time is not, I apprehend, to be attained. Our Lord before his ascension thus met this most interesting question, *It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.* He had, however, afterwards, as we see in the Revelation, the sealed book given to him to unloose the seals. We may have, I doubt not, such an approach to just anticipation as may very greatly strengthen faith, and guard us against the infidelity of the world, saying, *Where is the promise of his coming?* This I believe to be the very object and design of those numerous prophecies which have been called chronological, from the dates intermingled with them, and which we are assured *at the time of the end* shall no longer be *sealed up, but the wise shall understand.*

I would guard, however, here both you and myself most expressly against positively fixing dates, the exact knowledge of which God has purposely left in obscurity, lest we should rest in a mechanical fixing of dates, and be ensnared by a spirit of fatalism, and not attain that spirit of

dependance, watchfulness, and preparation of heart, with which our safety and spiritual prosperity are so much connected. Yet while I do this I am convinced, and I wish to spread the conviction, that prophetic dates are given for the use of the Church of Christ, and are to be unsealed in the latter days. And I add that as far as I can judge by those dates which are given to us in the Scriptures, to show the length of Israel's captivity, the time of their scattering appears to me to be just closing. I venture to proceed yet farther, and suggest for reflection and consideration some of these dates. Believing it to be calculated to strengthen your faith, and awaken your attention to the remarkable signs of the times in which we are living. I will suggest three dates which SEEM to have a termination in 1843; for our ignorance, and the obscurity of chronology itself, call us to speak with hesitation and real diffidence.

The whole period of Israel's affliction is called in the Scriptures the times of the Gentiles, and more explicitly, seven times, or 2,520 years. (Lev. xxvi. 18. 21. 24. 28; Daniel iv. 25; Luke xxi. 24.) If we reckon from the completion of ISRAEL'S captivity by Esarhaddon, 677 years before Christ, this period will expire 1843. Another period of 2,300 days or years is mentioned

(Dan. viii. 14) as commencing from the restoration of the sacrifice, continued in the desolation, and closing with the cleansed sanctuary. If this date be reckoned from Ezra's decree, 457 years before Christ, it terminates in 1843. A third date I will add. The half of the times of the Gentiles is 1260 years, a date frequently brought before us in Daniel, and the book of Revelation, as descriptive of the duration of Antichrist. The East has always been the scene of what is more visible, and open, and less spiritual and mystical, in God's revelations. And the Mahommedan Antichrist has fixed the era himself when his own rise is to be dated, by the Hegira, in the 622d year of our Lord. As the Turks and Arabs calculate not by solar, but by lunar years, the present is the universally proclaimed 1257th year of Mahommedanism, and its 1260 years expires also in 1843.* At the close of this 1260 years, Daniel explicitly shows that the Antichrist who *wears out the saints of the Most High* (Dan. vii. 25), and the

* The commencement of the seven times, or 2,520 years reckoned by lunar years, may be taken in the year 599 before Christ, as Nebuchadnezzar then first besieged Jerusalem, and took JUDAH captive to Babylon, and as Ezekiel dates his reckoning of the captivity from this period (Ezek. i. 2). Thus there are 1260 years from the captivity of Judah to the Hegira, and 1260 years from the Hegira to 1843.

Wilful King who *eralts himself above even God* (Dan. xi. 36), shall have accomplished his time to *scatter the power of the holy people.* (Dan. xii. 7.)

If these dates be correctly calculated, the predictions connected with them would show us that whatever previous turbulences may arise, the first steps towards the restoration of the Jews may commence, probably under the resumed dominion or protection of the leading powers of the Western Roman empire over Palestine, within three years of this time. That restoration also leads on, at a comparatively brief interval, to those momentous events which characterize the last days of the Gentile apostacy, and the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to our world.

But I would further endeavour still to guard what I have said. I give these expositions of dates, not as divinely revealed truths, but as suggestions of signs of the times, that are calculated to excite and increase our earnest attention, and to quicken our watchfulness. Ever let us carefully distinguish between the events and the times when they shall take place. The events are certain; there is a decreed hiddenness about the exact time. Our Lord's first coming was certain; but the time was so mysteriously revealed, that only the pious were in a state of expectancy, *waiting for the consolation of Israel.* Our Lord's second

coming is certain; but no man knows the day or the hour, yet *to them that look for him, he will appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* I, and those who think with me on this subject, may be quite mistaken in any suggestions about the dates; but, should it be so, let not our faith be in the least shaken as to the events themselves, which shall assuredly take place.

We must now hasten to consider the last part of our subject.

III. THE GLORIOUS RESULTS WHICH WILL FOLLOW.

They may be viewed in two respects:—The glory which thereby redounds to God, and the effects on the world at large.

1. THE GLORY WHICH REDOUNDS TO GOD. *And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them.*

THE PUBLIC NATURE OF THE FINAL RESTORATION of Israel is here made clear. It shall be before all the nations of the earth. It will not be confined to one kingdom, or interest only one nation. This publicity is often spoken of. *All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye. In that time shall the present be brought unto*

the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled. (Isaiah xviii. 3, 7.) It is a sign and token to all nations of the near approach of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the full triumph of his kingdom. Great as was their deliverance from Egypt, it affected but one part of the earth. Every nation will be affected by their future restoration. Every nation will have a sensible and manifest witness and proof of Jehovah's faithfulness and loving-kindness to Israel. Very decided is the testimony which Micah bears to this (vii. 15—17), *According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee.*

THE JOY OF THE LORD IN ISRAEL'S REDEMPTION is stated: *It shall be to me a name of joy. God delighteth in mercy.* His joy is in receiving and saving returning sinners. It is his pleasure to accomplish all his purposes of grace. O that this love of God were more shed abroad in all our hearts by the Holy Ghost! You see something of it in the father receiving and joyfully embracing the prodigal son; you see it in the conversion of St.

Paul, and his becoming a chosen vessel. But the highest exhibition of it is yet to come, when the posterity of those who murdered his only-begotten Son are to be received again. What a view Zephaniah presents of this (iii. 17): *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee (Jerusalem) is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will rejoice over thee with singing.* Surely this overflowing goodness to returning sinners should draw and win our hearts also. In restored Jerusalem being a name of joy, we have the very heart of God opened to us.

God also accounts it A PRAISE AND HONOUR TO HIM. In their restoration all his glorious attributes and perfections will be illustrated and displayed. Recovered Israel will, in the sight of all nations, be such a full manifestation of the truth of God's covenant love, of the riches of his abounding mercy, of the deep wisdom of all his providence, of the righteousness of all his dealing, even with his elect people, and of the comprehensive and widening reaches of all his goodness, as will, through eternity, bring glory to his great name. It will be such an unveiling of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God and his completed righteousness, that, in the strong language of Jeremiah, the very name

wherewith Jerusalem *shall be called shall be, The Lord our righteousness.*

We see in this prophecy God has himself anticipated these results. 2,500 years since, he looked forward to them as a cause of Divine joy. *It shall be, he says, to me a joy.* That which gives joy to a child will not give joy to a man; that which gives joy to a man will not give joy to an angel. O how great and good must that be, which gives joy to God! After ages have passed in preparation, he reveals himself as looking forward, through ages to come, with personal joy in the accomplishment of these his own extended purposes of love. If any despise this subject, O let them learn how far they are from the true greatness of the Divine mind! In the redounding of such joy and glory to God, we may learn how holy and how spiritual, how practical and how profitable this subject really is. Gentile unbelief of the Jewish restoration is not a matter of indifference, but pregnant with many spiritual evils. It fills us with high-minded thoughts of ourselves; it clouds from us the glory of God in all his dealings with the children of men. It leads us to hard thoughts of our Jewish brethren, and is opposed to God's own thoughts of love to them. Thus we become unfitted to be full witnesses of the name and character of the grace

and righteousness of God, both to Jew and Gentile.

On the other hand, faith in God's promises to his people Israel will increase all our sympathies with his present thoughts of love to them—will stir us up to earnest intercession for them, according with the very mind and the direct command of Christ himself (Isaiah lxii. 1—8), and will qualify us to be faithful witnesses to all nations of the righteousness and goodness of God.

I entreat you then, my brethren, to stand firm in the faith that all God's Word will be exactly accomplished. If our Saviour himself, in his last sufferings, when he could have called legions of angels to his aid, forbore to do so on the ground, *how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be*, learn in this distinctly, that nothing can hinder the exact, literal, and full accomplishment of God's Word.

2. THE EFFECTS ON THE WORLD AT LARGE are lastly brought before us. *All the nations of the earth shall hear all the goodness that I do unto them, and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.*

The way in which the restoration of the Jews will affect all nations, is becoming increasingly evident, from facts that are arising before our eyes, and from the dispersion of the Jews among

all nations. Where have they not been scattered, and into what part of the earth have they not been meted out. They are spread over the East. They pervade each kingdom of the Western Roman empire. Russia, and Poland, and Prussia, have millions of Jews. The last Russian census gives 1,080,224 Jews in Russia, apart from Poland. Africa and America are not without them. How can they be gathered from the Niger to the Volga; from remotest China in the East to Portugal in the West, and from each accessible country of North and South America, without moving every land, and making known through the earth the wonderful works of God. Various mighty effects of Divine interposition, removing all that is hostile to Christ, and establishing his own holy and happy kingdom, seem to be wrought in successive steps on the Gentile kingdoms during the progress of this wonderful work of grace.

Returning mercies to Israel are, in the Scriptures, after their temporary peaceable possession of their own land, in a partial restoration, followed by the opposition of the last form of Antichrist, who wages war against them when restored, and so brings down upon himself and his adherents God's terrible judgments yet to come upon an ungodly world. FEAR AND TERROR, then, under God's judgments, are the first effects of the full

victory and triumph of Israel. It is first *they shall fear*.

This is followed by TREMBLING AND REVERENCE for the majesty and mighty works of God. As the overthrow of Haman and the exaltation of Mordecai, caused the fear of the Jews to fall on every province and city of Persia, so the overthrow of Antichrist will affect all nations. The visible interference of God on Elijah's behalf in his contest with the prophets of Baal, made all the people fall on their faces, and cry out, *The Lord he is the God, the Lord he is the God*. The nations of the earth shall say, *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you*. (Zech. viii. 23.)

With this will be joined ADORING WONDER AT THE TRIUMPHS OF REDEEMING LOVE. Thus all nations are invited to praise him, *O sing unto the Lord, all the earth. O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory*. It is such an illustration of redeeming love as must affect every living being. If the conversion of Saul was *a pattern for them which should hereafter believe*, and he became the great apostle of the Gentiles; what will this conversion of the whole nation be, but life *from the dead* to the world. God's boundless mercy to the Jews, and

through them to all nations, will produce the highest admiration of his goodness, and the profoundest admiration of his perfections. The song of praise is already given to us. *He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel, and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all the earth, make a loud noise, rejoice and sing praise.*

These words, lastly, include THE SUBMISSION OF ALL NATIONS to the sovereign dispensations of God. Murmuring and grudging against Israel, as well as war and contention against each other, will cease and be lost in the overwhelming view of God's glory. All the sheep of every fold brought together, *there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.* The Saviour's prayer will be fully accomplished in that day: *The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*

From the largeness of the subject, I can only thus glance at some of these glorious results, and must now briefly apply the whole. I would do this by putting to you two questions.

1. DO YOU DESIRE THE GLORY OF YOUR GOD?

This ought to be, this is the first desire of every Christian. Love to God, supreme love to him, is the sum of that first table of the law, zeal for which has remarkably distinguished the Jewish nation. Even in rejecting Christ, it was from *a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge*. However this may be left out by the wisdom of this world, in the days in which we live, it can never be left out of his mind, who is taught of God to pray, *Hallowed be thy name*. You may, perhaps, hitherto have thought little of despising the Jew, but you do not, you cannot think little of disregarding God's glory. Restored Israel, then, shall most remarkably glorify God. Our Saviour himself thus addressed this people, *Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God*. As you desire, then, the glory of God, consider and weigh well his promises to Israel, gain an understanding of his purposes of love, believe simply and entirely what he has revealed explicitly and plainly, whatever miracles of grace, and power, and goodness may be required for their accomplishment. As you desire the glory of God seek the welfare of Zion. Take an interest in the restoration of the Jews, pray much for them, and especially aid all efforts for their spiritual welfare.

My second question is, DO YOU DESIRE THE

FIRST HAPPINESS OF MAN? This is the grand boast of the present age, a regard for the second table of the law.—a zeal for the welfare of the human race at large; and blessed be God for every real manifestation of it, for Bible and Missionary Societies, and all institutions aiming at the real good of man. But there are many who, in much zeal for the fancied good of man, seem ready to leave God out of his own world; they eagerly pursue the plans of their own wisdom for the exaltation of man, and disregard those of the infinite wisdom, and deeper and fuller love of the God and Father of all. My dear brethren, we cannot have useful knowledge without God, universities for sound learning without Christianity, general temperance without the Gospel, righteous peace without the reign of the Prince of Peace, and Britain's national glory continued without her Protestant principles. Popery is the scriptural Antichrist, and the Man of Sin, the Whore of Babylon, the great enemy of Christ and his Church. To make past sins in supporting Popery precedents for fresh sanctions of this mystery of iniquity, is to prefer our own honour to God's honour, and to justify and continue former national acts of apostacy, with aggravated rebellion against our only Lord and King. To give sanction to the corruptions of Popery, and to endeavour to lower

the plain testimony of our Articles against those corruptions, is to be unfaithful to the Church to which we belong, and fearfully unfaithful to Christ the Lord of glory. The Jew himself may lose every civil disability, and have power intrusted to him by us over our Christian State, and in doing so we only lose our national Christianity, and the Jew renounce the promised glories of his future inheritance. Men, in their indifference to national profession of true religion, may easily part with it, and the Infidel, with a mockery of kindness, may hail the measure of bestowing our national privileges on the Jews. Yet what is this but rejecting our Lord Jesus Christ himself and justifying his crucifixion. O how that very Infidel, when the Jew shall hereafter come forth as the remaining bulwark of Divine wrath, will, under the last Infidel Antichrist, show the real character of this assumed kindness by concentrating all the bitterness of apostate Gentiles against restored Israel. When the Jews were in times past the covenant people of God, and his true Church was amongst them, it was a blessed thing to favour them, and give them power in a state. While they remain in rebellion, however, against our Lord Jesus Christ, to give them this power is to rebel ourselves against the Lord Jesus.

O how sure are all faithless efforts ultimately to fail and recoil! See, my brethren, here the true foundation which God has laid in Zion for man's best happiness. By the Jew FAITHFUL to God, he has hitherto communicated—by the Jew faithful to God, he will yet communicate, the highest blessings to the world. But OBSERVE WELL, IT IS NOT BY UNCONVERTED JEWS, or by giving the trust of power in our Christian country to unconverted Jews. This is a marked evidence of national apostacy, and a seeking to rob the Jew of his real inheritance, and make him a partaker of our unbelief. But it is by the Jews converted, repentant, humbled, and restored, that he will bless the human race. It is not by renouncing Christ and his authority as the true King of nations ourselves, but by leading the Jews to look on him whom they have pierced, and to behold his glory as the King of Israel, that we shall be real blessings to mankind. Nearly 4,000 years since the promise was made to Abraham, *In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* Would you really bless the earth, then turn your attention to the seed of Abraham, and seek their spiritual welfare. It is not a formal baptismal regeneration, without faith, hope, and love, and an external apostolical succession, which Anti-christ can boast, but it is their conversion and

restoration, that shall be *life from the dead* to the world. The plans which mere human wisdom forms, or the taking of a limited part even of the Divine plan, which we may over estimate, enter not into the extent and depth of the evil, which men think they can thus remedy. Not only a restored Jerusalem, but every thing else that God has ordained, and God has predicted to come to pass, will be found to be required in accomplishing *the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

If, then, you would most effectually promote the best and highest and most enduring good of your fellow-men, you must enter into the apostle's feelings, *My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved* : you must rise to something of your Saviour's mind, *For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

Oh that we could bring our beloved country to enter more into this scriptural plan for securing national prosperity ! In order to promote such principles, we planned these lectures. Our brethren readily united with us. We bless God for the interest which they have already called forth among our fellow-Christians, and we have good

hope that this may spread through the Church of Christ, returning tenfold spiritual blessings to ourselves, and at length influence our national proceedings, and obtain for us the protection and blessing of the God of Israel, the only true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LECTURE IX.

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL, TO BE ANTICIPATED FROM THE UNCHANGEABLE NATIONALITY OF THE JEWS, AND GOD'S MIRACULOUS DEALINGS TOWARDS THEM.

BY THE REV. A. DALLAS,

CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, AND RECTOR OF WONSTON, HANTS.

DEUTERONOMY IV. 30—38.

“When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God,) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he swore unto them. For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it. Did ever people

hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else besides him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day."

It is a wonderful power bestowed on sinful creatures such as we are, my brethren, by which they are enabled to know something of the mind of God; and when we reflect on the extraordinary privilege which has been given to one peculiar people, that from them should spring the flesh by which the Son of God took the manhood to

himself, then it can hardly be other than a matter of deep interest, that we should be able to exercise that power, in turning the pages of the book of God, to read and know his mind concerning that favoured people.

The interest which Christians have hitherto felt in this matter, has been, indeed, very different from that which they ought to feel. But, praised be God, the time is come, as we may hope, when he is pleased to awaken a more proportioned feeling of interest concerning it in the hearts of his own spiritual people, his Church; and we find, that those who have learned to love Christ, are learning to feel for and love his kindred according to the flesh.

My brethren, it is the awakening of this interest, and the influence of this love, that have called us together at the present season, during which we have been considering the covenant which God made with Abraham, and afterwards renewed with David; and the manner in which he gathered his people out of their captivity in Babylon; and then how he has scattered them again amongst all countries, to the north, and the south, and the east, and to the west: and after having thus traced out what history records as facts past, one step further has been taken, and to the facts past

have been added some of the facts to come; we have, in following out the subject in these lectures, taken just one step into futurity, and anticipated the restoration of that people from this great and terrible dispersion.

Upon this first glance at unfulfilled prophecy, it appears as if we were stepping into the regions of imagination; the images seem so new, so surprising, so startling, to those who have been accustomed only to read of the facts past; and it will be well that we should pause to look at the ground upon which we stand, that we may judge whether we are justified by sound scriptural argument, in the exercise of that reason which God has given us, to go so far forward, and to expect that such a course of events as that unfolded to us in the Word of God is really to fill the future pages of history. And, therefore, it is my portion of this interesting subject to occupy your attention for a short time in considering the argument which may be drawn from the Scripture to establish the certain expectation, that the nation of the Jews shall exist in all time; inquiring whether we are justified in anticipating these wonderful results, from anything which we discover in the Word of God concerning them. And in taking this scriptural range of argument,

I purpose, *in the first place*, to inquire what are the reasons for expecting the unchangeableness of the nationality of the Jewish people: and then, *Secondly*, to ascertain what confirmation of that reasoning may be drawn from the result of the hindrances that have hitherto been interposed in the way of such an expected course: and, *Thirdly*, to draw a still further confirmation from the peculiar mode of God's past dealings with the Jews as a nation, as it bears upon their future prospects. And it will be seen in the course of this scriptural inquiry, that the text suggests the direction of thought which I desire to take.

Before, however, we proceed, it is necessary to remember, while we attempt to examine what God has revealed to us of his mind, that we can only discover it as God gives us his Spirit to do so. Foolish, indeed, are those, who enter upon such an examination in dependence on their own minds. May we ever be kept from such foolishness; and may God give us that wisdom which shall enable us to perceive and know, receive and feel, that which he has been pleased to reveal for our learning. May he, of his infinite mercy, give us the Holy Spirit. May he be present directing the mind and the words of his minister, and giving the people ears

to hear, and hearts to understand. May God, at this time, for Christ's sake, be with us, giving us his Holy Spirit!

I. My brethren, it is a matter of fact, that at this moment there exists a people who have existed nearly four thousand years. We know their origin, and can trace their course. They are at this moment *a nation*—under circumstances the most extraordinary, circumstances irreconcilable with the habits and ordinary experience of man. This people have never lost their nationality; they have continued to exist as a nation under difficulties which would have crushed any other people—which *have* crumbled nation after nation, people after people, into dust. Empires have passed; kingdoms have risen and fallen so as to be known now only in history—have been forgotten as nations, and read of in legendary tales; but the Jews exist, and have outlived the course of every other nation of the earth. Yet, it may be said, that for ought that human wisdom can discern, possibly they may hereafter be utterly swept from the earth, unless there be something peculiar in their case, which might establish a clear warrant for expecting that they will unchangeably exist as a nation. When we look into their case, as shown in Scripture, we find, that *there is a*

peculiarity which warrants us at once to say, that they *must* remain a people while the earth endures.

We are justified in speaking thus strongly, from considering the final object for which they were originally selected, nourished, brought up, and matured into a nation. This is the *first* point in considering the nature of their case. And having observed this, we will look, in the *second* place, to the parties with whom it pleased God to make an especial covenant for the purpose. And then, in the *third* place, we will look to him who made the covenant, and consider how his character bears upon this great point—the unchangeableness of the Jewish nationality.

1. As to the final object for which the Jewish nation was raised, formed, and brought forth into the circumstances through which history traces them, we may look to the root of the matter, and state, in general terms, that the Jewish nation was made a nation in order to carry out the purpose of God in the restoration of fallen man—in the restitution of the world to the state in which it was when God said, “It is very good,”—and in disappointing the designs of Satan, so that he shall not have a triumph. What a triumph he would have in hell through-

out eternity, if he could but have made the Almighty reverse his word, and blot out the fair earth which he had stamped with his approving "Very good"! What a shout of victory might be expected from the fallen angels in the midst of their torments, if that could ever take place! But they shall have no such triumph. God will restore all things. And for this purpose he has chosen one people to be the especial means, through which, in various ways, this great object shall be accomplished.

When man fell, even then there beamed forth the dawning of a promise of restoration: in the wisdom of God it was not made as a direct statement to Adam, but while God put the curse upon the woman, and upon the man, and upon the ground for man's sake, and a terrible sentence upon the tempter, he declared to the tempter as part of the sentence against him, that which, being spoken in the hearing of the punished man, opened the door of hope. Satan was, indeed, to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, but "*it shall bruise thy head.*" When afterwards it pleased God to define this promise more distinctly, and also to appoint the machinery by which it should be accomplished, he chose a man; it must have been some man, and it might have been any man, but it was

Abraham. He fixed upon him as the root, the stem, that should bear the branch, whose fruit should be the glorifying of the great God in the restoration of all things. It pleased God in his wisdom thus to arrange the means; and having chosen the man, Abraham, he made with him a covenant, which he confirmed by an oath, the obligation of which is expressed thus: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed:" or as he afterwards repeated in the 22d chapter of Genesis, when he so sorely tried the faith of Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." At first, the seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head; now, it is the seed of Abraham—limited to him, fixed in him: and enlarged by the declaration, that "all families"—"all nations" of the earth shall be blessed in him. Now, it is certain, that neither the first dawning promise to Adam, nor the covenant made with Abraham, have yet been fulfilled. It is not the character of God to excite a large hope and to meet it with a small fulfilment. It is not the character of God to disappoint the heart rightly and legitimately permitted to expect much. Consider what is the fair expectation to be derived even from the very first promise opened to Adam. What is suggested to the mind by the expression to

“bruise the heel?” It is calculated to convey a sense of lameness, an idea of hindering, and wounding, but no more than this. But what is suggested to the mind by the expression to “bruise the head?” Does it not convey at once an impression of destruction—altogether an overcoming and slaying? Now such a destruction has not yet befallen Satan. Indeed, after the opening of the Gospel dispensation, the Apostle Paul, looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, tells us, that the God of peace had even then to accomplish the bruising of Satan, though it was to happen *shortly*; and it has not yet been done. (Rom. xvi. 20.) “A thousand years” are with the Lord “as one day,” but Satan’s head is not yet bruised—he is not overcome yet. Oh! how busily, and, alas! how powerfully is he at work at this moment amongst us! Then consider the promise that was given to Abraham, and settled with a covenant and an oath; “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Has this been fulfilled? Are all the families—are all the nations of the earth blessed? The Gospel dispensation is the arrangement of God by which he visits the Gentiles, “to take out of them a people for his name;” to gather

“*out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,*” those who are to be the associated kings with the Lord Jesus—entering into “the inheritance of the saints in light”—sitting upon his throne, one with him, in the great day when he shall reign over the world, when “his name shall be one,” and “when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.” The object of the Gospel dispensation is to gather here some and there others, by faith in the name of Jesus; but what does the Lord say concerning them? “Many are called, few are chosen.” Very different from this is the promise to Abraham, that “*All families of the earth*”—“*all the nations of the earth*”—shall be blessed in his seed. This has not yet been fulfilled; but we look forward to the time when in its fullest sense it assuredly shall be fulfilled.

This then was the general grand object of the choice of Abraham; that in his family should be born the Saviour; that when the Son of God was to be made flesh of a woman, that woman was to be one born of his particular family. In establishing the covenant with Abraham, it pleased God further to enable us to see a secondary object in connexion with the first. This secondary object is, that the chosen family according to the flesh shall form a nation, a

people, for the establishment of a kingdom, a throne upon earth, on which shall sit the new Adam, who is to reign over all the earth; realizing the whole of God's blessing upon the first Adam; renewing the earth in all its brightness and in all its glory, so that it shall again be said to be, "Very good!" Now, when this second Adam thus takes the possession given to the first, he will have a throne to sit upon, in order to reign upon earth; and it has pleased God, in choosing the family, of whose flesh the Son should take manhood, to appoint by covenant that this family shall form the nation, constitute the kingdom, establish the throne upon which he shall sit. The relative position of this people may be shown by an illustration. The kingdom of England is but a portion of the British dominions; our Queen reigns over vast multitudes; but the English are the metropolitan people; and England is the place where her throne is established—where she reigns and rules—and whence goes forth the law. Just so it will be, when "the Lord shall be king over all the earth," in the day that there shall be "one Lord, and his name one," (Zech. xiv. 9): the law shall go forth from Jerusalem; and the Lord shall have his throne there; and there from time to time, as he wills and when he wills, shall he be seen

and known. This is referred to in the renewal of the covenant with David: it was then especially stated, that of the loins of David God would raise up one to sit upon his throne; and we have no difficulty in understanding to whom this applies, for the Spirit of God has explained it by the Apostle Peter. (Acts ii. 29—31.) “The patriarch David, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ.” The habit of being satisfied with a loose interpretation of Scripture, and undefined notions gathered up without sufficient consideration, often leads us to take words in a very erroneous sense. This passage is often read as if it stated that Jesus was promised to sit on Christ’s throne, and so a spiritual throne is imagined: this, however, could not be meant, for the words declare, that Jesus is to sit on David’s throne, which was a literal throne—the throne of the king of the Jews, reigning at Jerusalem over the Jews. The spiritual throne of Christ expresses the power by which Christ reigns now in the hearts of his people, and will continue to reign over their hearts for ever; but that never was David’s throne; and it is said,

that Christ shall sit upon David's throne. David sat upon a throne, which *typified* the spiritual throne of Christ; and in that sense the antitype is Christ's throne. When, therefore, it is said, that Christ shall sit upon *David's* throne, it must refer to the literal throne of David, for David never had a spiritual throne. It will only be necessary to corroborate this by mentioning one other similar text; many more may be discovered at your leisure. In the 9th of Isaiah we are told of the child to be born and the Son given unto us, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, *upon the throne of David*, and upon *his* kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." Every one of those passages which speak of Christ's sitting on the throne of David, and ruling over the kingdom of the Jews, give us the idea, that the object which God had, in a secondary point of view, was to raise up a kingdom and a people as the special inheritance over which should reign the seed of Abraham—the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head, and should bless every family in the world, and all the nations of the earth. And thus when in the second Psalm Jehovah says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance,

and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;" it is when he declares, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

From all this we gather, that the first great object of God's dealings with the Jews—the grand scope of the whole—is the restoration of the world and of man to the place where God set him at the beginning, and where he shall stand at the end; and that the secondary object is, to establish a metropolitan kingdom, from whence shall go forth the law, when "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

2. But it may be asked, might there not be some hindrance to the attainment of this object interposed by the parties concerned? To answer which inquiry it is necessary to ascertain who they were. With whom did God make this covenant?

When God arranged the plan, he chose Abraham, and called him; and the covenant that he was pleased to make was entered into with Abraham in person, and with his children of the first and second generation. It was renewed with Isaac—renewed also with Jacob—the line of descent was limited, and the covenant again renewed with David—and then in Christ it was established and fulfilled. "To Abraham and his

Seed were the promises made; he saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ." Now, the covenant being graciously made with Abraham, cannot be set aside by the conduct of some of his children. This point may be shown by an illustration. A man is made up of his limbs—his body is formed of parts; but there are vital parts, and parts that are not vital; the heart, the brain, the arteries—injure these, and the man dies; you may amputate the members one after another, the man still lives. Now in the body of the Jews, generation after generation as a nation, the persons with whom God made the covenant constitute the vital parts; Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and David—these were the arteries and brain; I say not that they were *the heart*; the heart is Christ, the Son of David; all the generations standing in connexion with these covenant heads are but members of the body, and they may or may not be filled with sore disease. Some *members* of a body may be a terror and an abomination to the *heart* of the man who has them; they may be cut off; but the living man still exists, as long as the vital principle is not touched. So with respect to the Jews. God made the covenant with the heart before all time, looking beforehand to the Seed in the loins of David: he renewed the covenant with those who

formed in his sight the vital parts—with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David: and, having done this, although generation after generation has been such as to make it necessary for God to cut off one after another, he looks only to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and David. This is repeated again and again in all the holy records. You have it in the text I have read to you. In the midst of the tribulation of these latter days, God will not forsake them; why? Because of “the covenant of their fathers, which he swore unto them,” and “because he loved their fathers.”

Now this is of essential importance. Time is nothing to God; God looks at the Jews, as when he saw them in Abraham; he looks at his covenant with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and is well pleased, calling himself by their name, by which he shall be called in eternity. We find this important point referred to constantly in the Psalms, and very pointedly in Romans xi. 28: “As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” We find it stated, therefore, from the beginning to the end of their dispensation, and afterwards in the Gospel dispensation—that it is for the fathers’ sakes that God has tolerated their children in their iniquity—because God loved Abraham—because he chose their fathers.

3. But there is another party to this covenant, even God himself. May he not alter? May he not say, I will have this people no more?

You and I, my brethren, dare not think of limiting God; and we are ready to say, Yes, he may, if he *will*. But he has said he *will not*. The very first words that ever were spoken in prophecy concerning the Jews, after they became a nation—distinctly, clearly, emphatically concerning that nation, were those spoken through Balaam. (Numb. xxiii. 19), “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” My brethren, we, the members of the Christian Church, are often in the habit of appropriating especially to ourselves the blessed words which describe the character of God in its bearings upon the hopes of man, and we occasionally forget to take into account the particular purpose of the portion of Scripture in which that character is described. In this passage it is declared, that God is “not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent,” specially in order to establish that he will not change his purpose concerning that great nation, then coming on to possess their land;—the nation of which Balaam said, “From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I

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behold him; lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." "God is not a man, that he should lie." "He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." Is God changed *now*? Has he become like "a man, that he should lie; or the son of man, that he should repent?" Does time make a difference in him? As that beginning prophecy to the Jews as a nation, so also speaks its concluding one in the last chapter of Malachi. "I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The Lord distinctly states that he does not change; and that it is only because he is unchangeable that the Jews, the "sons of Jacob," are not consumed. Then proceed to the New Testament, and there, in Romans xi. 29, you will find another statement, which shows that God's purpose concerning the Jews never will change; that what he has fixed, and settled, and declared, shall be done. It is written thus: "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance,"—without change of his mind. And this is said with reference especially to the Jewish people: "As touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes, FOR the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

And God has been pleased to give a large earnest, as evidence of the certainty that he will not change concerning the Jews. There were

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many things (as we shall shortly see) to induce him to reverse the covenant made with Abraham; but he reversed it not; and at length, in the fulness of time, the Seed was born—Jesus Christ came, and took flesh, and became a man made of a woman, the son of David, the son of Abraham. This was an earnest indeed of the continuance of his purpose, even unto its entire consummation; for now, in the eternal heavens, at the right hand of God, there is One who is A JEW—irrevocably A JEW. It is now impossible, in the nature of things, that any other nation than the Jews should be the nation of whom it can be said, “This man was born there.” And, as this is the case—as God has given this large earnest, who shall dare to say that Jehovah will ever change his purpose, and fail from his promise, that the throne of David shall be the Messiah’s kingdom, and the Jews the metropolitan people, when “the name of the Lord shall be one,” and “the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.”

Here, then, we may contemplate the wisdom of God, grasping in his mind all time and all events, seeing the end from the beginning; and, in the range of his unlimited view, making to himself an object—the restoration of man, and the restitution of all things on the earth; appointing the means

—the eternal Son ; becoming a man, of a particular family ; selecting that family—making it a nation, and keeping it to form, so to speak, the body-guard of the great King upon earth ; making a covenant with the head of that family, and determining with himself, “ I change not.” After discovering this, all we have to ask is, Has the whole been fulfilled ? Is the ultimate object attained ? Are we in the kingdom of glory ? Does “ the knowledge of the glory of the Lord cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea ? ” If this be not yet the case, then it *will* come to pass ; and as certainly the nation of the Jews shall exist, until and at the time when Christ shall take to himself his glory, and sit upon the throne of David. In that wonderful prophecy concerning the Jews, in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters of Numbers, God is himself speaking. He took a wretched money-loving man, and made him utter words. Balaam was one who had the knowledge of God, “ who knew the knowledge of the Most High,” but it was as a person in a trance, he *felt* nothing of the words he uttered ; and while his heart would have made him curse, God made use of his mouth to bless. He declared then, “ From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him ; lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” Has a

word failed to this day? Shall a word fail ever? God spoke—not Balaam; and IT SHALL BE DONE. The Jews have dwelt alone as a nation; they are a nation; yea, and they ever shall be a nation.

But then rises up the unbelieving heart of man! Many a one has striven to turn away from this conclusion, because it accords not with their notions—because it does not suit the views of their understandings; and they search how they may avoid this result. And thence comes the objection: “But the promises of God are all conditional, and the condition of this promise has not been fulfilled, and therefore it is forfeited.”

Now I think I might say, that this argument will not meet all the points we have established in the first division of this subject; but there is a second point which we will now consider, and which will altogether overturn such an objection. We grant to the objectors, that the Jews have not deserved the promised blessing nor fulfilled its conditions: but then—

II. Let us consider what has been the result of all those hindrances which have been placed in the way of the fulfilment of this great purpose of God.

There may be two kinds of hindrance—hindrances external, and hindrances internal.

The external hindrances may be said to be those which the power of man endeavours to raise against the fulfilment of God's purpose. But, my brethren, shall we waste one moment upon the consideration of these? That surely must be unnecessary. It is the extremity of folly, as we Christians well know, to imagine that man can do ought to prevail against God. We will leave unheeded, therefore, all the rage of Pharaoh, and all the fury of the Cæsars; all they could do—aye, and all the modern Pharaohs and the modern Cæsars can do, does not weigh one straw in the argument. And would to God, that all the infidels of the earth could know the utter fearlessness with which the weakest Christian can look upon their utmost efforts. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed;" but he laughs them to scorn. He sitteth in heaven, and sitteth in the hearts of his people; and "he laughs"—he "hath them in derision." We need not then pause to estimate any outward hindrance.

But there is a hindrance which we may well pause to consider—that real, that one hindrance, *sin*. If ever man could prevail to reverse the determination of God in his favour, it must be by a suicidal act. Let us then see

what sin has done that was likely to turn away God from his purpose towards the Jews; let us examine what the result has been.

Look back to the beginning of the whole matter. God chose Abraham. Was *he* free from sin? He tried him for a little while, and when a few short years of trial had passed—"Oh! that *Ishmael* might live before thee!" An unbelieving and impatient heart sought to turn away God from his purpose. But God said, "My purpose shall stand; *Sarah* shall have a son." Go on the next step; look at Isaac and Jacob. How cunning was the device of Satan in this case! Here was a dilemma indeed, in which the evil one hoped to place the Almighty to shake him from his purpose. On the one hand stood Isaac, intrusted with the power of communicating the inheritance, by which God's purpose was to be carried out in Jacob; and he knew it—"it had been said, The elder shall serve the younger;" and yet this sensual and self-willed sinner tried to set the purpose of God aside—to take away the blessing from him whom God had determined should be the channel through which he would convey it onward, and to bestow it upon Esau. On the other hand observe Jacob, trying by willing and presumptuous sin to manifest himself unfit to receive that

blessing. What a dilemma! Should not we have said, the blessing cannot be given to Esau through the wickedness of Isaac; but neither can it be given to Jacob, because of his own manifest wickedness in obtaining it. The apostle tells us in the 9th of Romans with reference to this very thing, nevertheless, "that the purpose of God according to election shall stand." Sin did its utmost; Satan devised his best dilemma; but God said, "My purpose shall stand."

But these were but as the first shooting forth of the brambles to choke the early blade. Look on the Jews when they had become a nation. Go to Egypt;—see them there, slothful, earthly, unmoved by the brightness of the glory set before them, satisfied with the flesh-pots of Egypt, willing to sit down and heap clay upon clay to build up the monuments of this world's folly, while God was willing to make *them* to be the monuments of his wisdom for ever. See them choosing the bondage of slavery, and thinking scorn of the glorious liberty. Did this turn away the Lord from his purpose? It altered him not. See them, as they go forth from Egypt, when they come into the wilderness, when they had heard Jehovah's voice. While Moses was forty days with God upon the mount,

even then they turned to image worship. But it did not alter the purpose of God. See them murmuring upon every occasion of trial; and when they come to the very borders of the promised land, and have even tasted the grapes of Eshcol, see them actually refusing to take possession under the assured promise of the strength of the Lord. But this did not turn the purpose of God. How did Jehovah act? He amputated a limb of the body; he said, 'Not a soul of that generation should possess the good land, but their children should grow up, and go in and possess it;' for he was not turned away from his purpose. He loved their fathers; and the people were "beloved for the fathers' sakes;" and therefore he carried them on. It will suffice merely to cast the eye over the long catalogue of their fearful sins, to prove that they were from the beginning and all along a stiff-necked people—as St. Stephen said, "always resisting the Holy Ghost." See them asking a king before the time. Look to David himself, an adulterer and the murderer of Uriah. Go on to Solomon's time; see the mount of the Lord—what was it called?—the mount of abomination because of his unmeasured idolatry. Think of the intolerable sins the nation were continually heaping up, until at last

their inveterate iniquity caused the cauldron of God's wrath to boil over, and he sent the remnant of the family into captivity to Babylon. Still he did not change his purpose. He poured out his wrath upon them; they filled up the measure of their sins again and again, and they were as often punished but never annihilated. Pass over many defiled pages of their history, and come at once to the climax of their offending; this will absolutely set aside the argument that the breaking of the conditions will neutralize the power of the promise. When they came to that point to which all the rays of time converge—the birth of the Son of God in the flesh of the family of David—what did they do? Then, indeed, did they fill up the measure of their sins to the full; they rejected the Son of God—they crucified the Lord of glory; they committed the extremest amount of crime that any people can do. Did God cast them off? The apostle asks this very question, and that after the dreadful consummation, “Hath God cast away his people?” And what is the answer? “God forbid. God hath *not* cast away his people, which he foreknew.” “At this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace,”—blindness *in part* has happened to the nation—but at length “the fulness of the Gentiles shall

come in" to the kingdom of grace, and shall make up the number of those who are to possess "the inheritance of the saints in light;" and when that number shall have been accomplished, then all Israel shall be saved in the manner written in the 59th chapter of Isaiah. I beseech you, brethren, to examine the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans with great attention. Some of us have been in the habit of making a full stop after those words, "And so all Israel shall be saved;" while in fact the sense runs on without any check or pause. It is distinctly stated, that "so all Israel shall be saved *as it is written*" in a particular part of the Scripture which is quoted. When God has taken out from the Gentiles and from the Jews "a remnant according to the election of grace," so far from his grand purpose being then fulfilled and completed, it shall be then that it shall further come to pass that "all Israel shall be saved as it is written" in the fifty-ninth of Isaiah. In order to know what salvation is meant, we must turn to that chapter, where it is said, "So they shall fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him; and the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob,

saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." That is to say, when the Lord shall have accomplished the number of his elect—the "remnant according to the election of grace"—then shall this prophecy in the fifty-ninth of Isaiah be accomplished:—the Lord shall come to Mount Zion, and all the world shall fear his name, from the west to the east, and the covenant shall be carried on by the Spirit of the Lord from generation to generation among the Jews upon earth. This will be their salvation nationally—all Israel shall be *thus* saved—saved from their sins—saved from the consequences of their sins—saved by the "pouring out of the Spirit of grace and of supplications upon them." And under that influence they shall mourn when they look on Him whom they have pierced: for, my brethren, be assured of this; sight did not make the first disciples receive Christ, and sight will not make the Jews receive Christ. If there be an infidel in this place, and if the Lord were to manifest himself in his glory, as he did on Mount Tabor to the chosen witnesses, the sight would not turn his heart. To do that, it needs "the Spirit of

grace and of supplications.” And when the Jews have that Spirit given to them at Jerusalem, then they shall mourn; then shall their hearts be softened; the prophecy in Isaiah shall thus be fulfilled—all Israel shall be saved as it is written: and this is their salvation.

Observe, then, my brethren, that, after the consummation of the extremest crime human nature could have imagined or accomplished, we find it distinctly declared that God had not “cast away his people.” The cauldron of his wrath indeed boiled over again, and you see the fearful consequences now; you see now in every part of the world the children of Abraham, the Jews, roaming in dispersion, and upon their foreheads stamped the wrath of God; they walk about the earth as the witnesses of his wrath; but also as the witnesses of his unchangeable faithfulness—for still they are not cast away; they are not sunk nor merged among the nations; the people still dwell alone, and are unchangeably a nation. There is no change of God’s purpose because of the breaking of the conditions. No; nothing shall alter the sealed covenant. God has maintained his wrath, I was about to say, for a long time; but I am reminded, that the Spirit of God tells us, through the mouth of St. Peter, that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;” and therefore it

may almost be said, that the Lord has not allowed more than one sun to go down upon his wrath against his people Israel; it is not yet two thousand years—two suns have not yet set. No, Zion is graven upon the palms of his hands, its walls are continually before him, dearly are the people “beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” The extraordinary prophecy of Balaam opens this view of the case. He says (Numb. xxiii.), God “hath *not beheld* iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he *seen* perverseness in Israel.” Here is just the point. God *knows* their iniquity, and God *punishes* it; but when he looks upon the covenant with Abraham—when he loves them “for the fathers’ sakes”—when he considers the object for which they have been brought up and carried thus far—then he will not *behold* their iniquity—he does not *see* their perverseness; and therefore they are not consumed.

III. And this brings me to the last point, which sets the seal upon the whole argument: it is the consideration of the peculiar mode of God’s dealings with the Jews, as a nation, which confirms the truth of what has been set forth, and enables us to look forward, and see how it bears upon their future prospects.

It may be said, that God has set his name upon this people in a public manner, by establishing for them a different system of providential arrange-

ment from that of every other nation in the world. This is a point which I do not think is sufficiently considered; and yet it is abundantly plain from their past history. We will briefly consider the character which uniformly distinguishes the events of God's dealings with the Jews.

His providential dealings with that people may be described as a *miraculous* system, as opposed to and distinguished from the *ordinary* system of providence carried on through the laws of nature. The laws of nature are so bound up with the providence by which God works the destinies of nations, that the Almighty hand need not be acknowledged by the infidel. In looking through the history of any country, it is quite possible to deduce rationally one step from another, and to show how events resulted from their proximate causes, or how they were knit together, according to the ordinary laws which govern the minds of men and the disposition of natural things. Behind all these, the Christian sees the ruling hand of God, and traces results to the will of the First Cause, moving all the ordinary laws of nature in a regular, uniform, beautiful manner, by the dispensation of angels, so that all the results "work together for good to them that love God," and for the disappointment of his enemies: but this is perceived only by the eye of faith. Such is the ordinary dealing of God with the nations of

the world: not so with reference to the Jews. For them God puts aside the laws of nature; and that not *once*, nor rarely; but it is his *system*, it is the distinguishing characteristic of his outward governing of the Jews. The laws of nature are made altogether to bend; so that, with the Jews, every great step in their whole history has been done miraculously, and not according to the order by which other nations are governed. A short inquiry will suffice to establish this truth. In Egypt, where they began to be a nation, they grew to their hundreds of thousands; and when the time was full, and they were matured to go forth and fulfil God's purposes, how did God act towards them? Did he, according to the laws of nature and of nations, by the operation of second causes, arrange some providential circumstance to draw them forth from Egypt? No: he called them to their standards by a great concert of miracles, harmonized upon the simple melody of one song, which sounded forth that the Creator of all things is the God of the Jews—a song of joy to them—a dirge to the Egyptians. The darkness, and the animals, and the blood, all join to make the wondrous proclamation. Moses takes up a few ashes, and sprinkles them in the air, and a dreadful disease covers man and beast; Moses lifts up his hand, and storm and hail fall on the devoted land. Such were the miracu-

lous throes by which Egypt unnaturally gave birth to this strange nation, and perished in the delivery.

And scarcely are they gone forth, when they come to an impediment—the Red Sea shuts them in; and what does God command? Why look ye on me? why do ye waste time inactively in crying to me?—GO FORWARD! As though he would say, ‘Have I not already manifested that your destiny is not conducted according to the ordinary laws of nature? Have I not already made it plain to you that you are guided by my direct immediate power; the power of Him that spake, and it was done; that commanded, and all things were created? GO FORWARD.’ They went forward, and they found that the sea had only shut them in, in order the more gloriously to send them forth; for a road was dried up for them, and the waves they had feared became their walls of defence. But their enemies came after them; and what followed? The laws of nature resumed their empire. The waves acted upon the original command—“Let the waters be gathered together into one place.” (Gen. i. 9.) The people, whose destiny formed the miraculous exception to the general rule of nature, had passed; the suspension of God’s law miraculously ceased as it had miraculously began; and the Egyptian chariots and all the host were overwhelmed by the waters. Not one of them was left to tell the tale:

but if any of the “mixed multitude” that went out with the Jews, and under their shelter passed safely through that passage so dreadful and destructive to the Egyptians,—if one of these could have had the heart to adventure in a bark across that great grave of a nation’s strength—that gulf, at once the type and the inlet to the more terrible lake where God’s enemies float undrowned in fire—when such a messenger had told his tale, what would the Egyptians have felt? what would they have said? they who then wore their fresh garments of mourning, each for the first-born of his family? They must have exclaimed—“It is Jehovah! He who created the world is the God of this people?”

But trace them forward still, and you find the same distinguishing characteristic mark all their history as it proceeds. See them in the wilderness; whence come the laws which are to govern them? Does God raise up to them a lawgiver? Does he send them some one who, exercising great sagacity of intellect, gives them laws of man’s wisdom? Far otherwise. He calls them around a mountain, appeals to their fears by fire and by thunder, and gives them laws with his own voice. Therefore Moses says in the text, “Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?”

Trace them onward still. When they marched through the howling wilderness, they wanted bread. The *earth* yields bread for *us* ; but *heaven* yielded bread for the Jews. They wanted water. We seek it in the *springs* of the ground ; the *rock* pours it forth for the Jews. They are appointed to remain in the wilderness for a whole generation, till the rebellious adults having been swept away, their children should grow up to manhood. Your garments and mine need renewing, but theirs waxed not old. Your feet and mine could ill support such painful journeyings, but their foot did not swell. Behold them at last at Jordan, approaching the watery wall that girt the promised land. The first touch of the feet of the Levites makes a way through the waters for them to pass. They come to one of those towns, of which it had been reported to them that the walls reached to the heavens ; at the blast of their trumpets the wall falls down. I may say with the apostle, "The time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets." As often as the Jews rebelled, and God in anger gave them up to their enemies, so often also he manifested that he was their God, and they were his people, by that singular characteristic of all his providential dealings towards them, miraculously showing that

he rules over them as he rules over no other people; for he guides them by his own mighty hand, and by his outstretched arm, while he guides the Gentile nations by his ordinary operations of nature. Let me, however, point to one pre-eminent instance, which places in juxtaposition the natural laws by which God governs the world, and the miraculous system according to which he governs the Jews. Their enemies were before them, and time would not suffice for vengeance upon them: in order to complete the victory of his people and to exhaust his wrath against the idolaters, Jehovah stayed the whole course of nature for an entire day, interposing a miraculous providential dispensation, reversing for a season that order which he gave when he said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years." The sun stood still for a whole day—the whole machinery of nature paused in its progress—and this was done in order that the Jews might overcome their enemies.

But as time will not allow of detail, let us come at once to that instance which may be the most important to consider, because it is perhaps the least likely to be received as self-evident; and yet when we give ourselves time to think, it is amongst

the most striking testimonies of the truth in question. Does this miraculous dispensation continue even now? Was any miracle manifested after their return from Babylon? It may rather be asked, was any miracle like to those manifested since that period? Did not the Son of God take flesh, and become a Jew? What miracle is equal to this? Was there not in this an entire reversing of the law of nature, when he by whom "all things were made," should be "made of a woman?" And did not the Son of David heal the sick and raise the dead; and work those miracles which had been manifested before through Elijah and Elisha? And at last, after forty short years, during which these preparatory miracles had been done in the land of the Jews, was not that great miracle performed, that they should be dispersed into all lands, and scattered into every country of the earth; and there in separation and tribulation should still continue a people, bearing witness of God's truth and of God's anger, while dwelling alone, not reckoned amongst the nations? Is not this contrary to the ordinary laws by which human character is governed? Is such a thing to be found as a people whom God has so enabled to continue, without national polity—without a centre of appeal—having their worship rendered impossible to be performed—without the impulse

of that fervent chivalrous feeling which might lead them to cling to the story of their ancestors, for it has been buried under the worthless rubbish of Rabbinical lore—a nation persecuted to the death, receiving at every man's hand a measure of wrath according to that which our Lord received at their hand when he “tasted death for every man.” If it had not been that the providential dispensation of God with this people is miraculous, hindering the natural effect of circumstances upon the heart and motives, would not the Jews have been annihilated centuries ago? Would they have existed in the second century after our Lord's death? Assuredly not. And yet here they are in the nineteenth century; a nation scattered and peeled, a people meted out and trodden down; but a nation still—a nation growing wealthy under persecution—a nation pillaged in one generation, and in the next inheriting increased wealth—a nation lifting up the standard of Jehovah in their national history even while they deny his truth with their lips. My brethren, this is a miracle which is before our eyes even to-day, and which has convinced multitudes; and this is a miracle which will justify me in saying, that from the day when God aroused them from Goshen and called them forth from Egypt, to this present moment, their distinguishing characteristic is, that

they are Jehovah's people, marked out to all beholders as his own, by the *miraculous system of providential dealing* under which they live.

We have thus seen, that from the very nature of the case the nation of the Jews must be a nation always; for that God has made to himself a final object, in order to the fulfilment of which they must ever continue to be a nation—that God has settled this in a covenant, not with the Jews of this or that generation, but with Abraham, with Isaac, with Jacob, with David, and with Christ; and in some generation of their seed he will perfectly perform it. That he has put his seal of truth and certainty upon this by the declarations of Scripture, that “he changes not, and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed”—that “his gifts and calling are without repentance.” We have seen, that this people, so marked out, so determined and chosen, so fixed unchangeably as a nation, have endeavoured by every combination of accumulated sin, up to the highest point to which it could be carried, to alter the determination of God; but they have failed. We have seen, further, that in spite of all their exceeding sinfulness, their stiff-neckedness, and their “always resisting the Holy Ghost,” God has unceasingly marked them as his own, and manifested that he goes before them as in a pillar of fire by night and

of cloud by day; governing them by a miraculous system of providence; even commending their condition in the present day to the intelligence of every man's mind, who can argue and reason, as a miracle which proves his presence with them, keeping them as the unchangeable nation for the development of his ultimate purposes. We have seen all these things. Shall we then wonder at anything we may hear respecting the next generation of this people? When he who is privileged to stand up and carry on this course of Lectures shall tell you of the tribulation that shall happen to them, and when he who follows shall tell you of the Lord coming in the midst of them, when "his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives"—whatever they proclaim, provided only they proclaim it out of the Word of God, shall we wonder—shall we be astonished or unbelieving? Shall we not, on the contrary, be ready to receive whatever God has written, seeing we have this sound, clear, scriptural argument to go upon—that this nation never can pass from the face of the earth, that it has tried in vain to alter God's purpose, but that in spite of itself, it is stamped with the character of God's miraculous dispensation?

Having brought you thus far, my brethren, I would desire to say a few words by way of application; may God of his mercy grant grace to each

of us, that they may be carried home to our hearts. It would be of little use that we should consider what God has done for the Jews merely as a matter of speculation or curiosity. Alas! many have been learned in the ways of God to his people, who are now waiting, reserved in Hades for the place prepared for the devil and his angels; who will indeed know of the great consummation of the glory of the King of the Jews, but who will never enter into the glory. It is not the speculative inquiry—it is not the curious search into miraculous records, that we are assembled in the name of Christ here to prosecute. Our object is that we may better know how to glorify God—that we may have a clearer view of our own path—and be able to discern more of our own duty, and of God's character in its application to ourselves.

The Jews truly are the seed of Abraham; but it is also true, that they are the seed of the woman; they are the children of Adam too. And we stand alike in that position. Now look at the character of the children of Adam, which has been brought before us in the course of this inquiry; read the Scriptures and see how they detail it still further. It will show you, that no mercy, no miracle, no dispensation of wonder, no presence of God—*nothing* will rectify the natural heart

of man, but only the Spirit of God taking of the things of Christ and showing them to that heart, taking possession of it altogether, and making us his temples. There must be the grace of that Spirit, to show us what we are. We very little consider what our natural hearts would lead us to. We live in a country where nationally Christ is lifted up; and the power of the mere name of Christ so enlightens all around, that we do not know what we should be in the darkness, until we come to look at a picture like this. Suppose God were to work miracles before us—and has he not? can you not look back upon your own secret history, and while men around remark upon your good fortune, your heart is bursting to acknowledge that God himself has led you by miracles of mercy? How many times has God preserved you from that, which might have sinned away the Spirit! How many times has he interposed for you against Satan, and has prevailed with you? My brethren, let us humble ourselves, and lie low at the foot of the cross, and say, “‘God be merciful to me a sinner:’ I see what sin is; I see what power it has over man; I see what I should be, if thy grace were not with me; give me, O Lord, the grace of thy Holy Spirit.”

And, again: we have not only had some glimpses into the secret character of man, but we have also

opened a way by which we may perceive something of the character of God—unchangeable in love. “While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” While we were yet sinners, he loved us, and sent his Son to show that love: for “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Oh! the unchangeable love of God! how often would our sins have turned him away from us, but that he changes not! Surely, my beloved brethren, after such a view of the unchangeable love of God, as we may gather from his dealings with his ancient people, we may go home encouraged, humbly crying, “God be merciful to me a sinner; Reward me not according to my iniquities. Thou that changest not, having sent thy Son to die for our sins, thou wilt save us from sin, for with him thou wilt surely give us all needful help.”

While this is the application for our own personal need, we ought not to go home making this application alone? How careless must he be, who, having inquired into this subject, and listened with attention and diligence, can think there is no special duty towards these Jews. We find in the sixty-second chapter of Isaiah a special call to the Gentiles with reference to them: “Go

through, go through the gates, prepare you the way of the people," the Jews; "cast up, cast up the highway, gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the peoples" (the word is in the plural number here; meaning the Gentiles); "behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world," (to the isles of the sea, here, to this region,) "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh." Hear this call, and remember that God "hath not cast away his people;" and God hath been pleased to appoint, that we, to whom the knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus" has been brought through their fall, should, in the latter days, be especially employed as the means of bringing the "remnant according to the election of grace," to the knowledge of the same truth; and stirring up the hearts of the whole people to that solemn repentance, which shall prepare them for the day when (as is said in the eighteenth chapter of Isaiah) the Lord shall employ the "land shadowing with wings," "that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters," to bring them as a present brought unto the Lord of Hosts, to the place of his name, the Mount Zion. We cannot, we dare not, look on and observe the movement that is at present going forward amongst them, and in their behalf, without saying,

What am I to do—how can I help this people? We are commanded to help them. We know that “the Lord’s arm is not shortened that it cannot save,” and that it has ever been an outstretched arm towards the Jews; and we are therefore waiting to see what he is about to do for them. But the time of our waiting for God to act is the only time during which we may be permitted to work on their behalf; and, praised be God, we are not to sit still and do nothing in this wonderful work. Who ever sat unmoved upon a hill that overlooked a battle-field? Who can look upon a struggle, such as that which is now going on between the Spirit of God and the powers of darkness—who can see God’s scattered force of Israel gathering up into one rank, closing into one division, as they are now, without being deeply interested in the advance that they will make against the enemy? And the Lord has told us how we may help on the struggle. He has declared to us, “Ye that are the Lord’s remembrancers,” who know the Lord, who have been taught to know him in Christ Jesus, “keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” Be assured of this; the heart that has most of the mind of God imprinted upon it—that has most of the things of Christ revealed to it—will be most ready to help on the

cause of the people “beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” That people whom he so loves, that when he appointed the Assyrian to be a sword in his hand to punish them, he was angry with him for helping forward their affliction, and showing them no mercy. (Zech. i. 15; Isaiah xlvii. 6.) Prayer—prayer is the great, the wonderful weapon; “giving God no rest,” reminding him (for he allows us to use the phrase), calling on him with the loudness and energy of one who desires to awaken a sleeper, coming to him continually, as the widow came to the unjust judge, wearying him (as it were) with our cry, “Oh! make Jerusalem a praise in the earth!” Those who have this impulse in their hearts, will have Christ’s Spirit in their hearts; and they will go on from grace to grace, and from strength to strength; for while they put God in remembrance of his promises to the Jews, they will find him abundantly manifesting the fulfilment of his promises to themselves in Jesus Christ our Lord.

LECTURE X.

THE LAST TRIBULATION OF THE JEWS,
AS CONNECTED WITH THEIR REPENTANCE, AND
PREPARATORY TO THE REVELATION
OF THE MESSIAH.

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ZECHARIAH XII. 10.

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

AN opinion has long since and widely prevailed, which was originally suggested by *this prophecy*, that the miraculous conversion of St. Paul was designed to be a type of the national conversion of

the Jews. St. Paul himself hath seemed to confirm this opinion, but he hath not gone so far : what he said, speaking of his own conversion, was this : that it was *a proof*, since he himself was an Israelite, that God had not cast off his people Israel ; and, moreover, that it was *a pledge* of mercy, even to the chief of sinners : “ He obtained mercy for this cause, that in him first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for *a pattern* to those that should hereafter believe on him to eternal life.” But we must distinguish between a pattern in general, and an exact pattern, or type. If the miraculous conversion of Saul of Tarsus was intended to be a type of the conversion of his nation, in that case would it not imply that his nation will become once more, not only zealots of the law, but also, like himself, persecutors of the Gospel ? This is, indeed, *a possible event*, but the apostle doth not warrant us to infer it. With this reserve, therefore, thus much *is certain* : first, that the whole nation will be converted, and next, that part of them, at least, will be converted after the pattern of the apostle ; namely, by an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, and by a revelation of the Lord himself from heaven.

Some, indeed, have doubted whether even thus much can be proved by plain testimonies of Scripture ; but I will show you that it is, in fact,

foretold in this prophecy; and the proof of this, both by the context, and by other plain testimonies of Scripture, shall be the central point of our discourse. Our subject is, *The last tribulation of the Jews, as connected with their repentance, and preparatory to the revelation of the Messiah* (a subject which it would be impossible to exhaust); but these three events,—the last *tribulation* of the Jews, their *rescue* by the Messiah, and their *repentance* both before and after, are so connected in point of time, that they will fall most naturally under one point of view; and the unity of the whole subject will best be preserved, if you will fix your attention, first, and chiefly, upon the miracle and marvellous grace of this prophecy. *And I will pour, &c.*

In this one sentence two events are foretold; two, the most stupendous not only that this world, but even the whole universe, ever did or ever can behold; the only-begotten Son of the most High God crucified upon earth and transfixed; and again, returning to the same spot, in his scars and his glory, with pardon and amnesty. First of all, then, let your attention, I beseech you, be divided between both these events; both the deed of that sacrilegious spear, as well as the mourning on account of it, because the first of these, past already, is our pledge for the future. Besides,

this season is set apart by our Church for meditation on the cross; and our communion now should be sad and earnest, like that of the two disciples, on their way to Emmaus, in the evening after the resurrection of our Lord: then Jesus himself drew near and went with them. And hearken, my beloved brethren,—“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there *am I* in the midst of them.” Lord, open thou our understandings also, that we may understand the Scriptures, and make our hearts burn within us!

Curiously exact was this prophecy, foretelling as it did, though but incidentally, the most peculiar circumstance of all that distinguished the death of the Messiah, that he should be transfixed by a spear; and wonderfully was it accomplished.

How exact! For, first, observe this gradation among the prophecies which, from age to age, foretold his death. By *Isaiah* it was foretold, “Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin;” he shall die the death. But what death, a natural or a violent one? By *Daniel* it was foretold, “The Messiah shall be cut off;” not a natural, but a violent death. But death by violence is of many kinds: by *the Psalmist* then it was foretold, “they pierced my hands and my feet;” a circumstance peculiar to the death of the cross. He shall die, he shall be cut off, he shall be crucified;

can anything be more particular than this? Why, yes, even more particularly still; by *this prophecy* it was foretold, what perhaps never happened, before or since, to any man even crucified, that not his hands and his feet only, but even his heart also should be pierced. Behold the prerogative of God most high: he seeth the things which are not, as though they were. He understandeth even the thoughts long before. And thus also, like the first Adam, sleeping (but this must be the sleep of death), the second Adam should give life to his bride, the Church.

Observe, next, that this second Adam, like the first, was to be the Son of God; and more, both David's Son, and David's Lord.

He was to be the Son of David. The Jews indeed have a fiction, unheard of by their forefathers, that a Messiah the Son of Joseph is predicted here. But ask them; who are they that shall be guilty of this nefarious deed, and pierce your Messiah? Be sure they will not take that blame to themselves. No, but adding to their fiction, a fictitious conjecture, they think it enough merely to *suppose* that it will be the act of some Gentile army who shall one day oppose their own restoration to Palestine. That it was indeed a Gentile spear which accomplished the prophecy, I confess; nay, more, that the hands

of all mankind may be said to have been on the shaft of that spear: and with regard to that nameless Gentile who dishonoured him being dead, Oh! wretched man that I am! I hear a whisper within me, "Thou art the man." Nevertheless, by no fact, nor figure of speech, may the plain words of this prophecy be so explained away: "*They* shall look upon me whom *they* have pierced, and *they* shall mourn for him." And who are they that shall mourn for him? The context informs us; the house of David, the house of Nathan, the house of Levi, the house of Shimei. And, by the way, remarkable it is, that these tribes by name, Judah, Levi, and Benjamin (for Shimei was a family of Benjamin), these three, and only these, are specified here: the other tribes, to wit, had no direct hand in the crucifixion of JESUS; they had been cast out seven centuries before for their *idolatry*, as these afterwards were dispersed for their *infidelity*, and for this murder. Howbeit, the same who by name are chief mourners here, have pierced him; the Jews have pierced their Messiah—Messiah the Son of David, for Messiah Son of Joseph there is none.

But this prophecy rather foretels of *David's Lord*, than of David's Son; for it foretels, that he who should be pierced, the same notwithstanding should pour upon them the spirit of grace and

of supplications. Observe: "*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.*" Whose word is this? "The burden of the word of *Jehovah* for Israel." Throughout it is *Jehovah* who speaks. And indeed obvious it is, that he who promises to pour upon man the spirit of grace must needs be God.

In vain would the rabbies attempt to find a flaw in the reading here (unless indeed any of them should have tampered with it themselves). In vain, if they succeeded even in that, would they deny, what many indeed of themselves have confessed, *that the Messiah was to be Jehovah himself.* Take them together, both the law and the prophets, and their grand revelation of all is this: that the angel of Jehovah, the angel of the covenant, who spake with the fathers, and who led the people in the wilderness, *was Jehovah himself*; that this same angel of the covenant, was to become their Messiah; and consequently that their Messiah was to be *Jehovah himself.* This is the testimony of heaven. One atonement must be once made for the sins of all, Pharisees and all; and one so infinite. He that offereth it unto God must himself be God! And this prophecy, in particular, never could have been

accomplished, except by one who should be God manifested in the flesh.

Great mysteries, indeed, are here on all sides: for, on the one hand, if they believed not Moses and the prophets, neither would they have believed though one had risen from the dead. On the other hand, had they *all* believed Moses and the prophets, those very prophets and Moses had been belied: for, had they known it, certainly never would they have crucified the Lord of glory; nay, they would never even have objected that Jesus ever once spake one syllable against that fundamental truth, "*Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah:*" he had spoken else against himself. And, on all hands, confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness, that ever God should be manifested in the flesh! Here it is that belief itself may almost wonder how it doth believe. These are mysteries (these sufferings of Christ, and the glory to follow), which beings of far higher capacity than ourselves desire to explore: and yet, it is not so much even our *understanding* that is perplexed; it is our *imagination* rather that is swallowed up in the immensity of such a mercy: a fact, indeed, this, which is no great wonder, since *even the works of his hand, and their immensity*, whether in the vast or the minute, are no less unimaginable by us.

Howbeit, even so *the omnipotence* of Jehovah was to be seen, subduing his own glory to the possibility of human converse. *The wisdom* of Jehovah was to be discerned, contriving the expiation of sin, infinite as was its demerit: contriving, that not by a penalty, paid unwillingly in the person of the culprit (for that must have been of an infinite duration), but by a penalty willingly paid, once for all, in the person of a Surety, of infinite dignity and merit; even so should the infinite demerit of sin find perfect expiation; and, at the same time, his own infinite justice and mercy should find perfect satisfaction. And the *goodness* of Jehovah, thus condescending to become man, and executing his own purpose, in the person of his own Son; how *ought* it to have been felt? And how *has* it been received? By converting his very condescension into an argument against his prerogative! *By denying that he ever could* have done such a thing; *by asserting*, when he did it, that he was, after all, no more than a man. What all men acknowledge for sublime, when the great Muscovite became *a shipwright*, to create an empire, and thereby became himself so much the more a thousand-fold an Emperor; a similar condescension, but magnified to infinitude, until it became an object too vast for eye of man to see, or heart to conceive, or tongue to tell; this, at

which principalities and powers stand abashed, *by man* how has it been received? With utter contempt! *Is not this the carpenter's son?* And still the heavens do stand, nor have not yet rushed down upon such an earth!

Transfer your thoughts now to the foot of the cross; and confess, that wonderful as was the prophecy itself, no less wonderful was its fulfilment.

Jesus had just expired. *Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.*" (John xix. 32—37.)

The evangelist, observe, *quotes the prophecy*, as being, in his day, an acknowledged prophecy of the Messiah. How, indeed, is it possible that the writers of the New Testament should have ventured, or how could it even have served their purpose, to distort the prophecies which they

quoted from their received sense? You observe, also, that he *records the fact*, as a perfect accomplishment of the prophecy; the spear-head had reached even the pericardium; upon which, had he not been dead already, he must have died instantly; and thence the water flowed, mingled with blood. Observe, lastly, that *he makes a great point of it*, and with reason. The prophecy had been public, and of ancient date; the circumstance itself was too particular and minute, as well as too distant, for any seer, with an unaided eye, ever to have foreseen; yet that very circumstance occurred, and the prophecy was fulfilled. We, as we read with indignation that one of the common soldiers, probably without orders, and certainly without necessity, thus wantonly violated that sacred shrine, even now when the holocaust was over—almost are we ready to exclaim, “What, was there never *angel* there, to cry through the dark, Hold!” No, they dared not; for had that execrable insult not been permitted, this prophecy had not been fulfilled; as, on the other hand, had *his* legs been broken, as those of the other two were, he could not have been the very paschal lamb; the one profanation must be peremptorily prevented, but the other must as absolutely be permitted. And, after all, had he not been buried

before the stars appeared, the type of Jonah, which he had himself adopted, would not have been verified.

The Jews have a legend, that when Moses smote the rock in the wilderness, there came forth blood before the water flowed. *But this is no legend*; that “when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took *the blood* of calves and of goats *with water*, (with scarlet wool and hyssop), and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant, which God hath enjoined unto you.” Thus, *the former* covenant was not struck and firmly sealed, but by the sprinkling of blood mingled with water; nor was *the better* covenant. “This is he that came by *water and blood*, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.” The twofold sacrament which followed the point of the Gentile spear was a fountain opened, that day, for sin and for uncleanness; and we, both the natural and the spiritual seed of Abraham, have only to approach, to wash, and be clean.

Lay all this together, and confess a wonder. His whole life was one infinite wonder. The accusation against him, was true; that being a man, he made himself equal with God: he did, indeed, by his wonderful works. Of his own most

holy life it has been said, that *he lived miracles*, as well as wrought them: it is most true. But after all recollect this concurrence of so many prophecies accomplished; so many prodigies of heaven and earth that accompanied; never forgetting the cross itself, and his own dying patience and prayer; the power of darkness let loose to afflict him, the influence of comfort restrained to relieve him; and the miracle above all miracles—(his resurrection from the dead, *crowned* all the rest, but the *greatest* it was not: “he loosed the pains of death because it was not possible for him to be holden of it:”) the miracle above all miracles, the wonder of heaven and earth was, and is, and ever will be, the cross of Christ.

Alas! we wonder, yet are not won! Well might the apostle of the Gentiles *determine* to know nothing among us, save Jesus Christ and him crucified; who being in the form of God, being in the joys of heaven, *determined* thus to transform himself, and to know no joy but this, the joy of our salvation: but we Gentiles, alas! how far are we from the mind of our apostle! And the Jews pretend that it was their sins that have delayed the advent of their Messiah. Absurd! for it was the foretold purpose of his coming, that those very sins might be expiated: it is not he that hath delayed his coming to them, but they

that have delayed their approach to him. But in sad earnest, my brethren, are the Jews the only men in the world that stand aloof? Is he not despised and rejected by the Gentiles also? Nay, is not this the very taunt of the Jews themselves, that he is thus both rejected and despised among us?

Nevertheless, the crime of the Gentiles exculpates not the high treason of the Jew: and with regard to the guilt of THE ANCIENT JEWS, at least, their own acts confessed it, and even on the day of the crucifixion; for all the people who came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned. Will you say, this was compassion only? Yes, and compunction also. We know it in the same manner as we know that Herod was haunted by the head of John the Baptist, namely, from their own mouth; for the conscience of the whole council confessed aloud, when the high priest said to the twelve apostles, “Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, *and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.*” But on the day of Pentecost, all that heard the testimony and argument of the Apostle Peter were both pierced to the heart and inquired, what they must do to be saved? And that same day about three thousand souls were added to the Church, by baptism in the

half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.” (Zech. xiv. 1—5.)

Let us then inquire, lastly, as to the *vision* of the Messiah, the greatest event of all; and for which all this tribulation should be preparatory: Is it literal? Is it a vision of himself in person? Decidedly. It is apparent on the face of the whole writing. You will grant that a *literal siege* is foretold. You will grant that the *mourning must be literal*, described as it is so particularly, every family by name. Well then, with regard to the *Messiah*; the Jews themselves concede that the Messiah was to be literally pierced; and they will tell you that this is what the word *pierced* properly signifies, and not only the puncture of grief or reproach. You may yourselves perceive that the whole context of mourning, as for an only son, or as for King Josiah in the valley of Megiddon, can relate only to a literal death: you are satisfied that, in fact, the Messiah was literally transfixed, or thrust through with a spear: then where all is so unquestionably literal, the *siege* literal, the *piercing*

literal, the *death* literal, the *mourning* literal, how can the *vision* be otherwise than literal also ?

But what needs even this inference when the rally to *the rescue* is obviously literal and personal? “*Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations.*” But this does not satisfy you? Yet surely this will: “*And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee!*” But *here* we have the descriptive accuracy almost of a legal instrument laying down the abutments of a field: “*His feet shall stand that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, towards the east.*” These are not figures but facts. It is the plain announcement of a matter of fact and personal arrival (in the midst of a literal earthquake too) at that very Mount of Olives from which, when he ascended up in the presence of his apostles, until a cloud received him out of their sight, immediately a vision of angels stood beside them and said, that his return *should be* even in like manner as they had seen him go into heaven. They certainly *shall* look upon that very Messiah whom they have pierced, and standing too on that very Mount of Olives. This is proof even to the Jew acknowledging only the authority of the prophet.

Simple and strong as this evidence is, confirmed it is to absolute certainty by the testimony and

authority of the Lord himself; for, upon two several occasions, *and in both foretelling his own return*, he has pointed (by a short and rapid reference peculiar to the Jews) *to this very prophecy*, as then to be fulfilled; then, when he himself shall return. The first occasion was when he delivered that great prophecy to his disciples sitting on this same Mount of Olives, and immediately before his crucifixion.

You recollect, that our Lord arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived whom he raised from the grave, six days before the passover, and thence proceeded in a kind of state to Jerusalem amidst the hosannas of the multitude. The tenant of the tomb, Lazarus, was in that procession, and hence those acclamations; that miracle extorted from their lips the fulfilment of another prediction by our prophet: “*Rejoice, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh!*” And let us remark, by the way, that in the midst of all this joy and jubilee he commanded a sudden halt; when, at the foot of that same Mount of Olives, he stood and passed sentence upon Jerusalem, tears interrupting speech. Consider all these circumstances; the call of Lazarus from the grave, his presence there almost in his winding sheet, the acclamations of the multitude, the sentence upon

Jerusalem, the temple swept again; all this considered, say, whether there was not even then a sort of rehearsal of that great day which is at hand, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven? Then all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; he shall descend with the thundering acclamations of the heavenly host; he shall both pass sentence and execute judgment, *“in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

But this is a digression; that night he lodged at Bethany, and the next day returning to the city and temple, he foretels what would be the result of his last efforts to save them; they would persecute his messengers and perish in their sins! At that thought, again he melts: *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, How often would I have gathered together thy children, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”* With these words he turned his

back upon the temple, and left it for the last time.

His disciples, struck with awe, and perplexed at what they had just heard, of the *desolation* of that house, and of his *coming* in the name of the Lord, put to him these questions; (he was again sitting on the Mount of Olives, with the temple and city full in view): "*Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?*" These questions drew from him that grand prophecy, out of which *I now select two consecutive passages*: the first of which, as I will show you, foretels both the then approaching *desolation* of the temple, including also the last tribulation of the Jews: and the second (which foretels of his *return*) refers us to *this very prophecy*, which is the centre of our whole discourse.

This is the first passage: "*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand :) Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field, return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child,*

and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For THEN SHALL BE GREAT TRIBULATION, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt. xxiv. 15—18.)

This prophecy, and especially this passage, is an instance of that kind of which Lord Bacon spake, when he said, “In sorting the prophecies of Scripture with their events, we must allow for that latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto Divine prophecies, being of the nature of their Divine Author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and therefore they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have a springing and germinant accomplishment through many ages, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age.” Here we have an example of this rule: the pregnant style of this passage in our Lord’s prophecy, describes under the same terms two similar events, (similar by the Divine Providence,) and thus, the prescience of our omniscient Lord announced a double siege; one at the beginning, and another at the end, of *that desolation* of the guilty nation; guilty both for the perpetration, and for their persistence in so damning a crime. In no wise is it to be *denied* that the desolation of Jerusalem by Titus was

here foretold by our Lord; but much more is it to be *asserted*, that “the height or fulness” of his prophecy refers to a desolation yet future; namely, to that yet future siege of Jerusalem. This cannot be disputed, if we will but attend to that caution given with so much meaning by our Lord: “*Whoso readeth let him understand.*”

The abomination that maketh desolate is spoken of by Daniel in two prophecies; in his famous *prophecy of the weeks*, and again, in what is commonly called the *Scripture of truth*. Grant, if you will, that our Lord referred to the *prophecy of the weeks*. He certainly quoted the *Scripture of truth*. Certainly, I say, because his own prophecy (for the illustration of which Daniel was quoted) proceeds in perfect harmony with that *Scripture of truth*, and chaunts like that the counter notes of woe and deliverance: *woe and tribulation first*, AND THAT WITHOUT PARALLEL; a tribulation compared with which, that of the Vespasian ram, or the Hadrian brand, or both, terrible as they might be, shall be no more than a type or sketch; but that tribulation and havoc shall be *suddenly lopt* (saith the Lord), those days shall for the elect’s sake *be cut short with surprise*, and there shall be *deliverance*.

I shall quote no more of *the Scripture of truth* than is absolutely necessary to show this parallel:

“ And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place THE ABOMINATION THAT MAKETH DESOLATE. . . . And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain ; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people : and there shall be A TIME OF TROUBLE, SUCH AS NEVER WAS since there was a nation even to that same time : and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”
(Dan. xi. 31 ; xii. 1.)

There is no question here, whether some of these words may or may not apply to Antiochus Epiphanes, as a type of that terrible Antichrist of the last days ; what is *certain* is, that our Lord quotes the prophecy as referring to a time long after the age of Antiochus ; that he quotes it in illustration of his own prophecy, to which it is perfectly parallel ; and, therefore, that *his own prophecy cannot be confined to that fall of Jerusalem by Titus, because the Scripture of truth must be understood of that siege of Jerusalem which is yet future.* Must? Yes ; for it is coupled, not with the *dispersion* of the Jews, chased by the Roman sword, but with their

deliverance ; the deliverance, not of a few only, but *that deliverance of the whole remnant of the nation*, which is the theme of Daniel, of our's, and of all the prophets.

Why should I longer dwell upon a tribulation so grievous? Read the 30th chapter of Jeremiah; read the prophecy of Joel; in short, wherever you read of *the destruction of the last enemies of the Jews*, (that is, in a multitude of prophecies,) there you must understand, that *their last tribulation also preceded* : and this last tribulation it is which prepares the remnant for that heart-stricken grief which the sight of their Messiah shall produce.

All these prophecies cry aloud, "*Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*" And what do they predict? Some new thing? Nay, but the ancient course of Divine Providence with them. For so, of old time, when from Egypt Moses was sent to deliver them, from that day began the travail of Israel, nor ended till the agony of their new birth was over, on the farther Red Sea shore. But as it was then, so shall it be; their column still shall stand erect, a solitary trophy, over the smoking ruins of an age gone, like a vapour. "*I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee.*"

Thus hath our Lord set his seal to the old prophecies which foretel their last tribulation. And immediately, in the next passage which I quote, (the consecutive passage of his prophecy) he gave them the sign they asked for *of his own return*. It should be a sign from heaven. “*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and THEN SHALL ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH (OR THE LAND) MOURN, and they shall see the Son of man coming IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet ; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*” (Matt. xxiv. 29—31.)

I said, that *on two occasions* our Lord referred us to this prophecy of our text. The other occasion was, when to John, in Patmos, he sent his great prophecy to the Gentiles, the Apocalypse. Here it is:—“*Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, AND THEY ALSO WHICH PIERCED HIM : AND ALL KINDREDS OF THE EARTH (OR TRIBES OF THE LAND) SHALL WAIL BECAUSE OF HIM.*” (Rev. i. 7.)

I do not affect to expound these two passages in

our Lord's two great prophecies; I challenge your own deliberate examination of them: all you have now to do is to observe, that in these two distinct prophecies—one given in the Isle of Patmos, the other on the Mount of Olives—our Lord *announced his own personal return*. And how? On both occasions, by adding *a double reference* to two ancient oracles; *to the same two in each case*; thereby certainly intimating, that, whatever those two oracles announce shall all be accomplished then, when he himself shall return. This double quotation *is repeated* for our double assurance. But which be these two ancient oracles? First, this of Daniel:—"I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. vii. 13, 14.)

You hear it is a prophecy, as our Lord himself teacheth us to understand it, *of his own personal advent*; and he is coming in the clouds of heaven for this purpose—to rule over all nations. And the other oracle? Is our text:—"And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall

mourn for him ;” which also he himself thus teacheth us to understand, *of his own personal advent.* Coming he is, and all the saints with him, and for this purpose also—to *give repentance unto Israel.* This shall be the twofold effect of his return to our world, both to the Jews and also to the Gentiles.

Asserting therefore no presumptuous oracle of our own, but studying the prophecy by itself, and expounding it by the authority of our Lord himself, we dare pronounce, that, thus far at least, the miraculous conversion of Saul of Tarsus was a pattern of the national conversion of his people: the Lord shall reveal himself to them; *but they shall be prepared for it by a bitter tribulation.*

It cannot but be observed that the case of the Jews—a people born, nurtured, and preserved to this day by miracle; would, throughout its whole course, harmonize with such a miraculous close. Obvious it is, moreover, that their case is peculiar, and presents a difficulty worthy of a Divine interposition. Their great national prejudice concerning *the nature and period of the kingdom of the Messiah,* is one which man can neither *exorcise* nor *argue* away. This double knot, twisted as it is into the Jewish mind by parental authority, tightened and hardened as it is by the cruelty and contempt of strangers, and by ages of injuries,

defies, (especially scattered as they are over the globe,) it defies the hand of man to dissolve it. Blessed Lord, what is thy mercy and grace? Even this knot which cannot be untied; why then it shall be cut. They wish for something to see, and nothing to believe; and they shall have their wish! They shall see, at length, that sign from heaven which they have so often demanded: they shall see the far-off star of Balaam, expanding into the gorgeous clouds of Daniel, and at last into the risen sun of Malachi: they shall behold their Messiah, in man's immortal and glorified nature, visibly descending from the skies. They shall see the fulfilment of their very hopes, (the hopes of the better sort, who expect a combined spiritual and temporal reign,) but, at the same time, and to their utter amazement, they shall behold that same Jesus whom they have crucified both Lord and Christ.

But here the Jew steps in and objects: "Then, my good friend, I for one must wait for that sign; since, according to the Scripture itself, such a sign, in my case, *is necessary*." No, by no means; *the Scripture* saith no such thing. *The Scripture itself hath predicted* that by all means (whether ordinary or extraordinary) some *should* believe in Christ, and others *would* not; *predictions, which are your condemnation and our proofs*. Neither in

the case of Saul of Tarsus, nor of his nation, was the miracle a *necessary* means: and yet, great as the paradox may seem, the miracle alone would not have been sufficient! God hath, in every age, afforded abundant *evidence* for faith in his own Son (Blessed be he!); and we call witnesses, even thousands of Jews, who from age to age have believed, and a thousandfold may they be multiplied!

Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed! Blessed are ye, O all ye *Israelites*, *indeed*; whether ye still remain pilgrims here, or elsewhere, be now at rest; thrice blessed, faithful confessors and martyrs to this blessed truth; that the God of your fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus, the glory of his people Israel. Whosoever and wheresoever ye be, that have forsaken father and mother, brethren and sisters, wife and children, for his sake; all ye who have been *rejected* as apostates, *received* with suspicion, *deprived* of the charities of home, *denied* even the means of living; yes, valiant, wise, good, and great hearts, ye are greatly blessed; for ye are the Lord's witnesses upon earth, how great is the force of truth, and the power of his Holy Spirit. *Thrice blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

Nevertheless, there is yet more grace. The apostle and the nation are two cases of *extra-*

ordinary grace, and each for an *extraordinary purpose*; namely, that the whole nation, as well as Saul of Tarsus, may thus, by so conspicuous a conversion, become one great apostle to the Gentiles; God so keeping his original purpose, even from the call of Abraham, that *in his seed* all the families of the earth should be blessed; not only, or chiefly, in *his posterity*, but in *his seed*, the seed of the woman, revealing himself to them, and thereby to all the families of the earth.

For no less a purpose than this, even the conversion of the whole world, they *shall* look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him; the infinite grace of the cross *shall* be acknowledged and felt. At the sight of those scars, even this unbelieving Thomas *shall* confess him, "My Lord and my God;" yea, every eye shall see him, and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of him; but these tribes especially, and by name. And of these, whether every man shall sit, like Paul, blinded for a season by the excessive glory of that presence, who may tell? But even though they should, yet certainly their darkness shall be visited by a vision of that ineffable look which melted the heart of Peter, and it hath broken theirs.

I said that look; for *miracles* are but means to an end, and appeals to the understanding; alone,

they never yet reached the heart; except, indeed, to harden it. So of old, Pharaoh's heart was hardened; so the Israelites beheld his miracles, and hardened their hearts at the sea, even at the Red Sea; so as to the miracles of Christ, the ancient Jews saw them, the modern Jews read them, and still their hearts are hardened. So true is that word of the Lord, "*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead.*" Lazarus rose, Christ rose; and the Roman soldiers saw his resurrection, while the earth rocked, and they became as dead men themselves; all these men, like a Caligula in a thunder-storm, both heard and saw the lightning flash, and the thunder roll, and acknowledged the voice of God; but the storm and its effect both rolled away together. Yes, and although the first-born from the dead, even the Prince of the creation of God, shall himself on that day more than rise from the dead, he shall come down from heaven in his scars; yet, did he not come forth as the great High Priest of the earth, *to bless* the people, (the plain raiment of his atonement laid aside,—all in his garments now of glory and beauty,) were it not for *that blessing*, still would he come in vain. On that self-same day, others there shall be who, when they shall once have looked upon that, his so dread majesty, shall not dare to do it the second

time, but shall cry to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne. But for these, he is not only present; virtue hath gone out of him; he hath poured upon them the Spirit of grace and of supplications, and therefore this mourning is not for terror, but remorse. None can turn the heart but he that made it; he brings all out of nothing at the conversion of the world, as well as at the creation of it; but it is not so much by the miracle of his presence, as by the *virtue* of his fiat; and as, *at the first Pentecost*, which was but the early rain, the first-fruits and earnest of the Spirit, thousands of Jews were pierced to the heart, repented, and were baptized, *so at that second Pentecost*, when he shall *pour* upon them the latter rain, the harvest and fulness of the blessings of the Spirit; now, at length, the whole nation, astonished and melted that he should have *been willing*, that he should have *been able*, thus to abase himself as the Son of man, and for such a purpose, that he might exalt *them* to become the sons of God; all the families that remain bury themselves in solitude and grief.

They mourn apart, *a private mourning*, as when a mother indulges and loves her grief, wailing over the only darling of her bosom lost. The whole land mourns, as at that great *public mourning* of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. That

was upon a great occasion, the death of the good king Josiah, by the hand of Pharaoh Necho; an event recorded in civil as well as sacred history, and even, as it is thought, upon the monuments of Egypt; but a greater than Josiah is here; not a principal person among the sons of men, but the only-begotten Son of the most High and Eternal God; and he, not coming to his death in honourable battle, and for no fault of their's, but made a *curse* for them—even for them and for their transgressions. Died Abner as a fool dieth? said David, with great regret. Died Messiah as *a curse for me*? shall be their lament. Died our Messiah as *a curse*; even as it is written, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree?” And another shall answer and say; Yea, on that tree of torture, that infamous tree; for it is also written, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. But Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” This shall be their moan. Conceive the prolonged days of that mourning, and self-loathing; the abstinence from all wine and pleasant meat; their clothes rent, dust on their heads; every tent sobs. But God himself, even their own God, shall wipe off all tears from every eye.

By the force of evidence, then, I am constrained

to conclude that the national repentance and conversion of the Jews, will resemble the miraculous conversion of St. Paul, at least as to part of them: *they shall be prepared for it by such a precious and bitter tribulation* as was unknown to him, (*his sufferings succeeded his conversion,*) but, like his, it shall be effected by an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, and by a revelation of the Lord himself from heaven, “*When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.*”

But I must by no means omit (which is indeed a main part of our subject), that this repentance of the Jews, this work of the holy and hallowing spirit of Christ, and of his majesty in presence; as they shall be prepared for it by the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire of that last tribulation *in their own land*, so must they begin by a still earlier preparation for it, here *in all these lands* of their dispersion: nay, they may (and God grant they may!) have begun already; *they must*, or ever they shall be permitted to take seizin of that land. An amazing concurrence of events indeed, and even a Divine interposition is necessary to bring about the restoration of all the outcasts of Israel, and all the dispersed of Judah; but he who once caused their whole host to ford the Red Sea in the equinox, and the overflowings of Jordan in time of harvest, both can and will perform

greater wonders even than these. But, above all, the same Almighty Power, “he who stretcheth out the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him,” even he himself must form within them that preparation of heart which he alone can. That also he will do, and the means are at hand. As in our own case, *individually*, repentance toward God, a certain degree of repentance, needs must precede our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; so with them also *nationally*, THE LAW shall be their schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ. What else may this passage possibly signify?

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out into the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and the Lord thy God

will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” (Deut. xxx. 1—6.)

Consider the position of this passage in the close of so great a prophecy, and surely it cannot intend merely a *conditional promise*, but rather an *absolute prediction* of an event decreed. This is one of those prophecies which *ought* to prompt their own fulfilment. The ultimate exaltation of this people must begin by a voluntary and profound humiliation before God, here, among the nations: *by acknowledging* the faithfulness and truth of Jehovah, both in the blessing and the curse; *by confessing* that they have walked contrary to him, and that he also hath walked contrary unto them; *by accepting* the punishment of their iniquity; *by praying*, ‘Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; *by keeping* his commandments and his statutes, which are written in the book of the law, *and turning* unto the Lord their God, with all their heart, and with all their soul. *Such was the posture of Daniel*, and of the penitents among his people, on the eve of their emancipation from Babylon.

Long since the Jews themselves have had a proverb among them, that if Israel would but repent to-day they should be restored to-morrow; and it is a true proverb. The two houses of Israel and Judah (which, like the rest of the world in our day, no doubt are in a state of agitation and transition)—how far, I say, these, scattered so widely as they are, may at the present moment do absolute homage to the law of Moses, we of the Gentiles have no accurate means of ascertaining: we hear good reports, indeed, from some quarters; and if such a preparation of hearts which God hath touched, shall really be going on to *any adequate extent*; in such a case, their repentance being once begun, their restoration is *at hand*. Already the breath of heaven is in the day-spring of the east. The whole world waits. For what? For this repentance; only for this previous degree of repentance; and, *ere long*, the land which the Lord swore unto their fathers to give it them; the land from which they have been proudly driven, they shall possess it; “*and they shall no more be plucked out of the land, which I have given them, saith the Lord God.*”

But if this degree of repentance be not yet begun, O what a work were here for an Elijah, if he would but come! He would turn the whispers of the prophets into the voice of a trumpet, the

trumpet of Sinai: How long will ye not be ashamed of this blind zeal for *two laws*? How long halt ye between two opinions? As every hope to see your Messiah, hear Moses, hear the prophets, hear the word of the Lord; thus saith the Lord of hosts: “*Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.*” Alas! will their Elijah never make his appearance? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? But I remember Isaiah intimates, that when he shall appear, it will be in their own land (indeed, he must needs be a great traveller else); from the top of Carmel shall he hear the sound of an abundance of rain, the latter rain of the Spirit; and in the wilderness, and upon the banks of the Jordan, shall he preach and prosper.

And now, my brethren, with regard to ourselves: Be it that we are only sinners of the Gentiles, and that *our forefathers* were not *directly* guilty of this blood (a fact, however, the certainty of which belongs only to Him who shall one day assort their forgotten families; He who shall one day rescue both from sea and land the seminal atom of every glorified body,—he only knoweth how far this is true), howbeit, *their forefathers* at least were the means of our being *washed* in that blood. Their fathers slew the prophets; yet, such is the

force of truth, they built their sepulchres; they slew even the Messiah, but they built his sepulchre also, *Christendom*. One way or other we are intimately bound up with this people; and our bounden duty it is, at the very least, to do all our possible to undeceive and convince them that *Christianity* is a system not offensive to God, not injurious to his ancient people; and, above all, see to it, that in all your intercourse with the unconverted part of that nation, you never derogate—no, not in the least degree, from the authority of the law of Moses: *them at least it binds*. Certainly, I shall not affront this congregation so much as to exhort them to leave off contempt. I know it is said that *the Jew* is still the butt of sport, and term of scorn, to the meanest of our people; perhaps, but certainly to none else. God in heaven be praised! that in this part of the world, at least, if the Jews continue, *as they ought*, separate from all nations, yet all others no longer separate themselves from the Jews. Scorn is no longer their portion. And let all Christians indeed be assured, that the Jews *feel* their friendship. How should they not? Are they not men? If you have despised them, did they not resent it? And if you honour them, *do* they not feel it? They do, they must,—the human heart cannot

resist it. *Remember, that the greatest power on earth, after all, is the law of kindness.*

And I can easily believe you *will* remember it. I almost wish I could as easily call up from her native seas the mighty majesty of Britain, that we might have her here, a vision throned, and hear with our own ears her solemn protestation: to what effect? To promote the ambitious projects of any Israelite whatever? I pray the God of heaven to avert such omen! Great evil, as well as great good, may yet, and probably will, spring up out of this people. No, but that she will never be forgetful of what shall become her own august character as to whatsoever may either now, or ever hereafter shall, concern the high and paramount interests of the temporal and spiritual kingdom of the Son of God. Yet, vain were the wish that voice of *man* should reach *her ear*; the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, will speak to *her heart*, and *she will hear his voice*, saying; “This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations: and this is my promise unto Abraham, my friend; *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.*” Great potentate as she is, whose dowry is the ocean, whom the Almighty arbiter of nations hath exalted and distinguished with all blessings,

temporal and spiritual, above every other people, ancient or modern, under the dome of heaven; so far above them all, that in his favour she still stands, second only to this her sister, her fallen sister, Judah; God himself hath so obviously destined her to some yet unknown, but mighty moral purpose of his own, that *she* may be trusted, *she* never will forget that royal house, nor the Lion of Judah, nor his motto, nor whose hand engraved it, "*Thy hand in the neck of thine enemies.*" Who shall rival Judah?

But you, the children of Great Britain, who, perhaps, already stand on tiptoe to catch the first gleam, if peradventure the glory of the Lord may begin to flatter the mountain-tops, or, at least, are expecting, when the standard of Judah unfurling shall marshal the processions of the holy people, yet pause; eager as your humanity may be, it must be damped when you shudder at the thought of that last, that bitter tribulation. Even your charity must begin at home. Suffer me to remind *you* also of the fearful forewarnings of the Sacred Book, concerning those calamities of the latter days, which the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, have yet to pass through—*that tide of calamities*, secretly and insensibly setting in, so that no man alive may be able to say where the salt and the

freshes meet; though every babe shall but too surely know when it is at the flood.

Whatever secondary causes may have hitherto checked the concentration of so terrible a power as that which is the burden of all Divine prophecies, those causes shall not always continue to operate: the sure word of prophecy foretels, that, *to the astonishment of the world*, yet a mighty power (be it universal empire, confederacy, usurpation, or whatsoever the event may show), *a mighty power*, of contemptible origin indeed, and stealthy of growth at first, but suddenly expanded into a horrible magnitude; of short existence also, but of outrageous impiety and violence, hurrying within its vortex whatsoever lives upon the surface of what was once the territory of all the ancient empires; this prodigious birth of time must still precede the kingdom of the Son of God. This is no dead monster of the imagination, to be contemplated without dread, and even with satisfaction; this is the sure word of prophecy *unfulfilled*.

I abstain from quoting the Apocalypse, that great prophecy to the Gentile Church, because each quotation would require an exposition; you know, in general, what shall be the character of the last war upon earth. *Who can fix its period?* One thing is obvious; that among the nations of

the world there is even now a general pause, like the pause just before battle; a suspense greater than which could scarcely be, if all men knew for certain that the last war was already come. But if you, for one, see no such portentous signs abroad, that itself is the greatest sign. As for those who tremble at the Word of God, and who thence have learned that *persecution*, as well as war, rapine, and destruction, shall be one feature of *the great tribulation*; how awful is both the suspense and the obscurity which broods over *their* minds; while Providence Divine appears to be gradually darkening the stage, for the catastrophe of this deep tragedy, The fall of man.

For, from what quarter cometh *this Satanic woe*? Wherefore doth the Lord prepare to pour down upon the earth the *vials of his wrath*? Why should all nations thus rise up against Jerusalem? Who are they? The nations of the west, or the kings of the east? A confederacy of both? And who shall lead them on, Jew or Gentile? When those armies shall be mustering in the field, will the dæmons of infidelity, imposture, and anarchy, seize the opportunity to career it everywhere at home? Will those maniacs, burst from prison, march themselves, the miscreants of that war, the confederates of that Antichrist, to challenge the charge upon their devoted heads, of all Messiah's

embattled hosts, *his own crusade*? Woe to the annihilated wretch that shall contend with his Maker!

Thus we conjecture in the dark, and like a knot of Arabs in the desert, discussing each casual foot-print in the sand, its direction or date; which way danger journeys; how far off it lurks; so what more common now, than for those who fear the Lord to speak often one to another, and much in like manner; their attention fixed on *everything* that can give them information, and *every one*, as though his own personal safety were precarious, moving forward with the utmost circumspection?

The footsteps of our God we may not trace, whose path is not in the sand but in the great waters; what then? All prophecies, and all miracles combine to assure us, that neither matter, nor fate, nor man, are masters of the world; but that he who made all still overrules all, and will judge all: yes, they who *will* not be redeemed, can neither will nor choose, but needs must be judged. Evil, indeed, will be the *Woe of the earth*; but the *vials of heaven* shall be worse. And furthermore, are they indeed so omniscient as to be absolutely certain, that there is positively no hell? No terror nor torments of a never-dying death?

From whatever quarter that woe of the earth may spring, its *character* we know; such as cannot but drag down heaven upon its head. Do you ask, what? *Infidelity*; that disease of which the world already is sick beyond a cure; *a world of infidelity*. Hear this, all ye people: “*There have been FALSE PROPHETS among this people (the Jews) even as there shall be FALSE TEACHERS among you (the Christians) who PRIVILY shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction; AND MANY SHALL FOLLOW THEIR PERNICIOUS WAYS.*” Hear and beware. This wretched Cain himself, branded as he is with the mark of God, for *his* infidelity and murder, and ever since everywhere *a wanderer*; even he shall no longer, nowhere, be remembered *as a warning*: belike, on account of his new-built city, *the standing miracle* being no more. Yes, and even the Church of Christ, by reason of her adversary and floods of ungodliness, why she, even she herself, suddenly withered into the widow of the parable, and crying in vain for vengeance; even *her religious faith*, the very life-blood of society, *shall sink* to so feeble and fluttering a pulse as to be questionable (and the question is the Lord’s): *Whether, when the Son of man cometh,*

shall he find faith upon earth? Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall! Remember the Lord's apostles; some bought and sold him, others denied and foreswore him, but all forsook him and fled. This state of things when it shall arrive, as arrive it shall; this, with its consequent falsehood and violence, shall be "the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men." "*Behold, Jehovah cometh as a fire, and his chariot as a whirlwind;*" and may we not almost hear the thunder of his wheels?

But what ears of flesh and blood may endure that dreadful blazon of the prophetic roll? Everywhere an ulcerated world of lepers. Rivers? Yea, seas of blood. *Above*, the red glare of the simoom, and blasphemy *below*; darkness, and blasphemies, and pains; kings in full march, and demons in full employ; false miracles, false Messiahs; the gathering-cry to the battle, of that great day of Almighty God, that Ar-mageddon, and blood to the horse bridles: the shout of an archangel!—voices, and thunders, and lightnings—and ever and anon, the trump of God, still waxing louder and louder still. *And then, at last, that earthquake*, so mighty and so great, as was never since men were upon earth, every island fled away, and the mountains not to be found: *then that hail, the*

hail-plague of an avenging God; he gave them *hailstones, fire, and brimstone*; the whole artillery of all the hosts of heaven itself in arms. The Dragon, that Serpent of old, is seized, bound, cast down, shut, and sealed up in the abyss.

Such is the warning of the great prophecy to us Gentiles; such the catastrophe of the fall of man; the havoc of hell and Satan; the vengeance due to a crucified, and for ever insulted Redeemer, God manifested in the flesh.

Yet courage! Even though these things should happen in our day (which who can tell?), the summer flies indeed will have vanished at the first scowl of the storm, (Blessed Lord, for thy grace!) nevertheless, let every Israelite indeed, every one that shall be found written in the book, lift up *their* heads, for their redemption draweth nigh, *saith the Lord*. Pray for your country. Whatever is, is best; fear God, and fear nought. A cloud of witnesses hang over the battlements of heaven, the well-wishers of our faith; and *one there is*, the author and finisher of our faith, (author on the cross, and finisher on the throne,) *a man*, that shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm. "*Peace, be still.*" Out of so outrageous a chaos, can he, or can he not, call forth a new heaven and a new earth? He both can and will instate you in a seat therein; bright,

for ever bright, with the meridian sun of his own presence and glory. Thence, shall you look back with delight, on every danger past.

Then let the scoffers come, walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? Where? Why here. They ask, and it is the Lord that replies; the Lord himself: *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”*

Where we began, there let us end; remembering the solemnities of this season. And God help us poor sinners, and be merciful unto us; for the Jews and others, after all, were but accessaries to the death of our Lord; we are the principals, and sin alone is the murderer. The guilt of a felon world, hath been imputed to him. *“He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;—ALL, ALL.—*Whether those who have transfixed him with a spear, or those who have betrayed him with a kiss. Wretched sinners as we are, may his grace then pierce our hearts also; may we live, while we live, mourning

but trusting, hoping, loving, serving, and waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Unto him that loved *us*, and washed us from our sins with his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father; to him be *glory and dominion* for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XI.

THE ADVENT OF MESSIAH.

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PSALM CII. 13—16.

“Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.”

“BEHOLD, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.”*

“Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not

* Isaiah xl. 10.

be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”* “Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”† “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”‡ “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” §

Such, my brethren, is the strain of the Old and New Testament revelation on the all-important doctrine of the Messiah's advent in glory; echoed as it has been from patriarch to prophet—from the great Master of the house to his inspired apostles—from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, to the concluding witness of the inspired canon—from the suffering saints of the early Church to the professed followers of Christ in this generation—a subject so plainly revealed by God, and so fraught with momentous prospects to the Church and the world, that we can only feel surprised that apathy

* Psalm xcvi. 10. 13.

† John xvi. 22.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 42.

§ Rev. iii. 11.

to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up." * Oh, who can say the amount of guilt the Gentile Churches have contracted by this neglect of plain duty? What highmindedness they have shown in despising their elder sister! What withering formality has followed from not listening to the word of the Lord: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee."

When these things are brought in the shape of grave accusations against the past or present Church, there are many of tender consciences who inquire, of what Jerusalem we speak? and whether we mean the *personal coming* of the Lord when we reiterate the words of Christ: "Behold, I come quickly?" They seem to hope that by identifying Jerusalem with the Church of Christ, they may acquit themselves of want of interest in the prophetic word, and by dwelling on the spiritual presence of Christ in the heart, they need not investigate the future prospect of Israel, nor be careful about discovering what coming in glory is intended in my text or similar passages. Now, this mode of stating the question brings us to the root of the whole matter. If we

* Isaiah li. 17, 18.

can justly admit such a *figurative* interpretation of the Old Testament expressions—that Jerusalem may mean the Christian Church, and the Lord's appearance in glory imply nothing more than his presence in the heart or the interpositions of his providence—then we admit that the claims of Israel will be more easily got rid of—the word of prophecy reduced to a small compass, and the prospects of a waiting Church will be vastly abbreviated; but if it should appear that such a mode of interpretation is vicious in its very nature and calculated to undermine all solid views of the Bible (if consistently followed out), then shall we bring forward our citations with more confidence, and we shall find that the “sure word of prophecy is a light shining in a dark place, to which we shall do well to give heed.” *

The subject of Israel's standing as a nation—the unchangeable nature of their election—the future prospects of woe and restoration which are before that remarkable people, have all been so fully connected with *literal* interpretation by the brethren who have preceded me, that I feel that it would be mere tautology to repeat these arguments; I have only to press upon your attentive recollection the fundamental

* 2 Peter i. 19.

her remarkable offspring were to be manifested in due time—but that the king of whom Jeremiah spoke might not appear in his glory, but remain in secret, and that Judah and Israel did not mean the tribes or nation usually so called, but professors of Christ's name in different generations?

I might cite many similar texts predictive of the sufferings and future kingdom of Messiah, and place them in juxtaposition, and by thus transplanting ourselves in imagination to the days of Old Testament revelation, we might detect the inconsistency of that mode of exposition that requires us to take the picture of Messiah's sorrows in all their living colours, but to dismiss the prospect of the kingdom, with its manifested king, its obedient subjects, and universal sway, with that summary canon of interpretation, "All these things are spiritual or mystical; Judah is the Christian Church, and David's throne is the believer's heart!"

Let us present the question to you in another shape. Great efforts are now made to bring before the Jewish people, the Divine credentials of Christianity; and for this feature of our day we should feel devoutly thankful. In our efforts to prove to them, that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, of whom Moses and the prophets

did write, we naturally turn to the graphic description of his sufferings contained in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. And though the Jew will endeavour to show that these expressions are *figurative*,—that the *whole nation* is spoken of under the character of one man, and that the sorrows described, though they appear to be *propitiatory*, are, in fact, *penal*,—the wages of national sins,—we are able to refute such a torturing of the prophet's words, by showing, that the language is plainly descriptive of a *person* and not a *nation*. So much so that the person spoken of is distinguished from the rest of the people. He was to be “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;” but of the nation it is said, “*We* hid as it were our faces from him—he was despised, and *we* esteemed him not.”

Above all, we would press on the Jew, that the sufferings here described were not personally penal, but vicarious—endured for the sake of others—to make reparation to Divine Justice for our sins. “He was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” “He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant

justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." From this language there is no escape. No wit of man can torture these gracious declarations into anything but what the plain and decisive language imports, viz., the *vicarious sufferings* of God's righteous servant and man's great Redeemer. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at, that this notable chapter is unpleasing to the Jewish ear, and that to this day its sound is never heard in the public service of the synagogue, nor its contents ever subjected to the partial degree of interpretation allowed by Rabbinical authority to the great body of the people.

Suppose then, that after pressing this portion of Scripture on the serious attention of the Jewish inquirer, we should open another chapter in the same prophet—I mean the twenty-fifth chapter of Isaiah—and read the following words, "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." In an isolated form, the generality of interpreters would feel no difficulty in applying it to the second advent of the Lord Christ, but on reading the whole chapter with the Jew we shall be obliged to admit, that so far from his nation being destroyed or set aside, they shall be pre-

served for the final triumph of righteousness in the world—"for the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth." Yea, and their blessedness shall be extended to the ends of the earth. Jerusalem being the centre-point of light from which the rays shall diverge: "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things. . . . And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations."* Here the synchronism contradicts the spiritualizing system that confounds the Jewish nation with the Christian Church, and that speaks of the gradual enlightenment of the world antecedent to the Lord's return; this is perceived, and the interpreter, unable to see or unwilling to receive the manifestation of the kingdom with the personal reign of the king, is forced back upon the mystical system of interpretation: "Lo, this is our God," is made to mean the indwelling power of the Spirit or the interference of an Almighty Providence. Surely, the Jew must be stumbled at such inconsistent commentaries. When we wish him to receive a crucified Saviour, we press into our argument every passage that depicts the suffering and humiliation of Messiah, and demand

* Is. xxv. 6, 7.

that God's declarations of the incarnation and vicarious work of Shiloh be taken in their *plain* and *grammatical* bearing; but when *he* dilates on the future glory of Israel and the personal reign of the triumphant Son of David, then the Christian advocate too often deserts his own principles of literal interpretation, and requires such descriptions to be taken in a figurative and mystical sense. Is it any wonder, that since the days of Origen, the father of the fatal system of making the letter of Scripture clash with the recondite meaning, that the Christian Church has ceased to win over the ancient people of God to the profession of the true faith? And can we be surprised that the claims of that people, and the missionary work amongst them, were wholly neglected, until God in mercy has once more taught many in his Church, not to seek what Scripture can be made to say, but to receive as little children what our Heavenly Father has plainly and faithfully promised?

It may be here mentioned, as corroborative of these views, that all our missionaries amongst the Jews have been led to the doctrine of the Second Advent, in connexion with the kingdom of righteousness on the earth, either at their preparatory studies, or from their actual controversies with the Jews. I believe that we have

not a single instance of a Jewish missionary, who has remained any time the advocate of a mere spiritual millenium ; and I am quite confident that the unanimous testimony of our most experienced missionaries is, that to hope to convert any of the Jewish family by setting before them the prophecies of a suffering Messiah in their literal meaning—whilst all the prophecies which speak of the reign of the Son of David, the restoration of Israel, the renovation of the earth, and the fulness of righteousness, are explained in an obscure and mystical sense—is, of all others, the most unfounded expectation and fruitless labour.

But why should there be all this jealousy about the doctrine of the Second Advent, and this unwillingness to receive Scripture testimony on the subject? Why, for example, when my text says, “When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory,” should there be an anxiety to deny that this appearance is *personal*, and this Zion is the very city that bore that name in David’s day? We sometimes hear it said, Because these views tend to draw the mind from the cross of Christ and from the indwelling power of the Spirit in the heart. But to this objection we have an obvious reply : give every truth its place, and aim at setting it forth in just

proportion, and there will be then no danger of advancing one truth at the expense of another. From the cross springs all our hopes of salvation and the assurance of God's love to guilty man. So far from wishing to turn men away from the crucified Jesus, our constant testimony is, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."* And I believe every sincere Christian, whether among the people or the pastors of the flock, will sincerely join with the apostle's heart-stirring declaration, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."† But do we hide the cross in holding out the brightness of the crown? Far from it: the one is the way to the other: the blood of redemption removes the barrier that shut up the kingdom of glory. The agonies of the garden and cross proclaim, in the plainest accents of mercy, that God is propitiated and man redeemed: and so far from making light of the work of our propitiatory Surety, we know of no way of access to the Father's bosom of mercy, or the gates of the New Jerusalem, except through

* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

† Gal. vi. 14.

the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. For whom, my brethren, do we look?—is it not for the *Saviour* who bore our sins upon his own body on the tree? For whom do we wait?—is it not for the same Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification? and who, being taken up into heaven in triumph, shall so come in like manner? * “Thousand thousands shall minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand shall stand before him.” † The hosts of heaven shall inquire, “Who is this king of glory?” and the triumphant Church shall respond, “The Lord strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle; the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.” ‡

Neither does the expectation of the Advent and kingdom of Christ interfere with the true views of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of God’s people. We not only believe in “the coming of the Holy Ghost,” but we hold that the Saviour’s promise of another Comforter has been fulfilled and is being fulfilled in the present day. This is the dispensation of the Spirit. He dwells in the Church with vivifying power. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. § And our

* Acts i. 11.

† Dan. vii. 10.

‡ Ps. xxiv. 8, 10.

§ Rom. xiv. 17.

continual prayer for the professed followers of Christ is, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost."*

It is a confusion of terms (to say the least), to assert that the Church is *waiting* for the spiritual kingdom,—how can we wait for what has already taken place? how can we pray for the kingdom to come, which, blessed be God, is already the possession of God's dear children? We wait for what we have not; we hope for what we see not; we have the Saviour's gifts, but we have not the Saviour *himself*, in the fulness of his personal presence. We have the tokens and pledges of his love, but we do not see the King eye to eye. And I wot that they speak very unguardedly, and in language they would not use to a beloved earthly friend, when they say, "If we have the graces of the Spirit, and the peace of God within, we are not so anxious about the *personal* coming of the Lord." Oh! my brethren, let no such unmeaning or ungrateful language escape your lips. What are all the gifts of Christ without Christ himself? What the token of his love, but as they lead us to the very Fountain-head? What weight of glory could be reserved for the Church, if you abstract from it the very presence

* Rom. xv. 13.

of the Lamb of God? What kingdom of perfection, without the throne and sceptre, and countenance of the King of saints?

In a word, then, we *cleave* to the cross of atonement. We actually *possess* the first-fruits of the Spirit; but we *look* for the coming of the day of God. We are stretching forth the vision of expectation to the time when “the *Lord himself* shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

And we conclude this part of our subject by re-asserting, that all just interpretation of Scripture, all the analogy of faith, and all consistency of exposition, demand of us to receive the language of the text, and all similar expressions, as testimonies to the Lord’s personal coming, when the glorious things spoken of the city of God shall be fulfilled—“when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and before his ancients, gloriously.”†

II. *What great events shall synchronize with the Lord’s appearance in glory?* In examining

* 1 Thess. iv. 16—18.

† Is. xxiv. 23.

this question, I must bear in mind that my subject is part of a Course of Lectures on the Scriptural Claims of the People of Israel, and therefore I must not allow myself to range amongst the many deeply-interesting and collateral subjects which bear on the advent of Messiah, except as they are connected with the prospects of the ancient people of God. Indeed, time would not allow me to dwell on such topics as the latter day judgments,—the renovation of the earth,—the blessedness of the converted heathen, and the glory of the New Jerusalem. If, therefore, I pass these by, or slightly touch on them, it is not from any doubt of their reality or importance, but only because they would lead me away from the original design of these lectures. Indeed, in drawing your attention to the connexion there exists between the prospects of Israel and the day of the Lord, I feel that I must take the great leading features of the prophetic vision, and not dwell on the more minute parts of it, in the short space of time that yet remains for me to discourse. The difficulty in a subject like this, is not the lack of Scripture testimony, but the extent of selection, that we may be explicit without being tedious, and succinct without being ambiguous.

First, Jerusalam shall be rebuilt, and the land

of Israel shall be restored to more than its former glory in the day of Christ's coming. So my text declares, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory," and so with equal plainness do other portions of the Word speak. Thus Isaiah, "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken;* but mark, that this state of things is still further brightened with the promise, "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty." "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king."† The same prophet announces, "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. . . . The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One

* Isa. xxxiii. 20.

† Ibid 17. 22.

of Israel.”* We here remark the building up Jerusalem in stately majesty, the abundant fertility of a land once cursed with barrenness for the sins of the people, and the submission of the nations that formerly oppressed the Jews, are all made to synchronize with the appearance of the great King, when *he will make the place of his feet glorious*. Who will undertake to prove that these things have been accomplished? and if none will make such an attempt, we may well ask, has not God fixed the time, viz., when *he* shall come who once trod the holy city with painful footsteps, but who shall appear again with all the mien and dignity of the King of kings?

Again, Zechariah testifies, “The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”† And all this, remark, shall occur when “the day of the Lord cometh” (ver. 1), and “when his feet shall stand upon the Mount

* Isa. lx. 10—14.

† Zech. xiv. 9—11.

of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.” (Ver. 4.) To these testimonies many more might be added,—especially such as hold out the prospect of abundant fertility,—of larger and more extensive possession of Canaan than has ever yet been obtained by Israel,—of the restoration of the waste places to their more than former glory, and of the undisturbed inheritance to the literal seed of Abraham, such as history demonstrates could not have yet existed; but I am only anxious to show that these things are all dovetailed with the blessed and absorbing prospect of the Lord’s return in glory, and I humbly think that the citations made are amply sufficient, and therefore commend them to your serious and prayerful consideration.

Secondly, *Jerusalem shall be the throne of the manifested King.* We are all aware that the promised Messiah was not only of the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Judah, but likewise of the family of David; but we have reason to fear that many Christians take a very shallow view of the promises made to David which relate to his glorious offspring as concerning the flesh; they are willing to dwell on Christ’s title—the Son of David, because it proves his incarnation and his lineal descent, and, thereby, the fulfilment of prophecy; but they do not dwell on the whole scope

of the promise to David: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it. Of the fruit of thy body will I set *upon thy throne*." And yet the angel distinctly dwells, at the annunciation, on this part of the Messiah's glory: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the *throne* of his father David." † We cannot imagine such a promise to be fulfilled, without identifying Christ and David in the kingly office. Neither can we be satisfied with the mere general idea that David having been a king, he was a type of the Lord Christ; for, in this view, any monarch of Israel, and, indeed, of any other kingdom, would have equally answered the purpose; whereas the prophecy announced, and the angel repeated the promise,—that the Messiah, who should have his lineal descent from David, should sit on the *throne* of his father. In what sense, I ask, can we expect this prediction to be accomplished in the Son of Man? To say that Christ's throne is the *believer's heart*, is to repeat a mere truism, which we not only admit, but earnestly pray to enjoy in all its vitality; but surely this is no explanation of the prophecy; it bears not in the slightest way on the subject. David cannot reign in my heart; no creature must divide the supreme homage I owe to

• Psalm cxxxii. 11.

† Luke i. 32.

Christ. Instead of desiring such a result, the Word of the Lord forbids it, and it is the Christian's prayer that he may, without the smallest reserve, obey the enjoined surrender, "My son, give *me* thine heart." Neither did the Son of Man obtain David's throne when he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive; for then he was highly exalted to the Father's right hand, and sat down on the Father's throne, where he sits until the time of his return to earth;* but of the literal son of Jesse, the apostle declares, "David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool."† So that we may well demand of those who deny the personal reign of Christ on earth, what is that throne of David which the Old and New Testament both hold out as the Saviour's right? What is it? What do you mean by it? It is *not* the believer's heart,—it is *not* the throne of the eternal Father. What then is it? Give us some explanation, that we may compare it with what, after long thought and inquiry, we conceive to be the true view. If yours should appear more scriptural, I trust that God will enable us to set aside all human systems, and follow the Divine

* See Rev. iii. 21; Psalm cx. 1, 2.

† Acts ii. 34, 35.

Word; but as yet I candidly confess I have seldom heard any attempted solution from those who oppose our views; and, when it has been attempted, the explanation has been so vague and confused that I could not understand it, and therefore I am not able to repeat it.

The view, then, we propose is founded on the fact that David was the king of the Jews, and that he reigned over that people in Jerusalem, the favoured city, and that the Messiah is identified with him rather than any other king of Israel, because he was one of the most honoured progenitors of the Messiah; one in whom, like Abraham before him, the promises relative to the true Shiloh mainly centered. The seed of the woman was to be the son of Abraham, and the son of David; as such he was to fulfil the type of the sorrowing son of Jesse, when "he went up by the ascent of the Mount of Olivet, and wept as he went up;"* but as such he was also to be the completion of David's brighter days, when he sat in peace in his own palace, and looked round on the conquered enemies of Israel, as no more lifting up a hand against him. In that period we can perceive the administration of the reign of righteousness, when all things shall be subdued to the Son, when the enemies of God shall be trampled

* 2 Sam. xv. 30.

under his feet, when, as the prophet tells us, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” *

In that state of blessedness a peculiar honour shall be conferred on Jerusalem : “At that time they shall call Jerusalem *the throne* of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord ; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.” † And therefore we learn from the preceding verse that they shall say no more, “the ark of the Lord,” neither shall “it come to mind.” And why shall their holy and once-valued emblem be forgotten ? because the antitype shall be there—the King of Israel plainly revealed—the true Messiah in the midst of his restored and converted people.

Micah testifies the same thing, “In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted. And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast off a strong nation : and the Lord *shall reign over them* in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.” ‡ So does Zechariah, after setting forth the last

* Isaiah xi. 9.

† Jer. iii. 17.

‡ Micah iv. 6, 7.

tribulation of the Jews, so forcibly described in the preceding Lecture, "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations (viz., those which shall be gathered by Antichrist against the holy city), as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east;.....and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.....And the Lord shall be *king* over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.....And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.....And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."* Here, then, is the holy city made the place of solemn assemblies in a higher degree than she ever was before—here is the Son of David ruling in the midst of his restored and now obedient Israel—here is the submission of the once hostile nations to the metropolitan city of the righteous world. Here, in fact, is a state of triumph, holiness, and happiness, never yet witnessed in this world, and therefore not even at Jerusalem. Nor shall it

* Zech. xiv. 3, 4. 9. 11. 16.

be, as we hold, until the Son of David is not merely *appointed*, but *acknowledged* to be—the King of the Jews, and until the city can be called from the name of the glorious king, “Jehovah Sham-mah—The Lord is there.”*

But now, an objection meets us which cannot be fairly passed over, because, if it has all the weight that the objector gives to it, a very great barrier would stand in the way of receiving the view proposed of David’s throne. The question asked is, How can our Lord be expected to reign *personally* in the literal Jerusalem, when other portions of Scripture represent him dwelling in the New Jerusalem with the glorified saints? Thus, St. John describes the city: “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”† I freely admit, that such a description does not seem to agree with the views which Isaiah and Ezekiel give us of the literal restored Jerusalem—the latter prophet expressly telling us, that there shall be a much more magnificent temple than any that has yet been raised. And though, perhaps, we cannot enter into the minute details which that

* Ezek. xlviii. 35.

† Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

prophet gives of the temple and city in the forty-fifth and following chapters, yet they are sufficient to prove, that nothing equal to them has yet appeared in our world, and also, that the city with its temple is not the same as the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse, where all shall be spiritual and exempt from outward rites and ordinances. Is there not then one obvious mode of solving the difficulty? Jerusalem, which is above and shall come down out of heaven,* will be the place of bright and *permanent* glory, where the Lamb of God shall manifest the rays of his majesty to his glorified saints. Jerusalem, in its literal character, will be the habitation of the *restored* Jews, and not of the saints who now form the Lamb's wife and shall then have done with humanity. In that favoured earthly city, Christ will *manifest* his kingly power and *appear* to his ancient people as their rightful sovereign, but he will not *dwell* there as he will in the New Jerusalem—the one will be the place of his *manifestation*, the other, of his *abiding glory*. In the one he will take possession of the throne of David, and “execute judgment and justice in the earth.” In the other, he will reign as the heir of all things—the elect of God being assessors of his throne—heirs of God, and joint heirs

* Rev. xxi. 2.

with Christ. In one case, the Messiah has his throne in the midst of Israel, where he occasionally holds out the sceptre that they may do him homage and acknowledge him as king of the Jews. In the other, he has his palace and settled throne where his royal glory shines forth in *daily* lustre. It signifies little what the exact position of the New Jerusalem shall be—whether, as some think, that it will be the Eden of the renewed earth, or, as others hold, that it will be an abode of glory suspended over our planet, in the light of which the converted nation shall rejoice as we do in the light of the sun. All we know is, that it will be in some way connected with a redeemed and renovated world, and that it will form the separate abode of glory for the King of kings and his beatified saints.*

• It is due to a diligent student of prophecy, my respected friend, Mr. Frere, to mention his view of the New Jerusalem, as given in his structure of the Apocalypse. He considers that there are two descents of the city, one mentioned in Rev. xxi. 1—9, which synchronizes with the millennial state, beginning at Rev. xix., and continued through chap. xx.: and a *second* descent in chap. xxi. 10, which belongs to the *eternal* state. One great difficulty to this view lies in the expression, “And there shall be no more sea,” which can scarcely comport with the millenium. I should rather prefer the view which applies the whole of chap. xxi. to the eternal state—the description of the New Jerusalem befitting it at any time of its existence—but in the millennial state, it

If it be needful to say more on this supposed contradiction, I would merely add, in the way of illustration, that we feel no difficulty in regarding the throne of our gracious Monarch as peculiarly connected with this great metropolis, and yet we could suppose her visiting the distant parts of the British dominions and sitting there on the throne of state, and periodically administering justice without in the least interfering with that honour that belongs to the chief seat of government; and so we can readily suppose, that in the literal Jerusalem, the Messiah will be manifested as the King of Israel without interfering with that brighter and more abiding glory which appertain to the New Jerusalem, where he and all his chosen saints shall reign over a happy and converted world.

Thirdly, *Jerusalem shall be a source of blessing to the nations of the earth in the period of Messiah's advent.* On this part of the subject I intend to be very brief, partly because the subject has already been alluded to, and partly because we have not time enough to enter on a minute inquiry.

The prophets make the general assertion—and that not unfrequently—that as the house of Israel is the manifest dwelling of the saints, separated from all others. In the eternal state, all seems to merge into this glorious city of habitation.

had been formerly a curse among the heathen, so, when restored, they shall be a blessing to all around them.* In their dispersion the unbelieving nations would naturally conclude that God had deserted them, and from thence infer, to the disparagement of the God of the Hebrews, that he was not able to defend and preserve them in their pristine glory; thus they became a stumbling-block to the heathen. But in their restitution to their former polity, and to their position as *first* of the nations, men will perceive that God has not forsaken his people, but that he has returned to dwell among them. Their deliverance from the long period of dispersion, their preservation from the Infidel Antichrist, the restoration of their city and temple, notwithstanding the combined efforts of the last confederacy; all these events will evince that the arm of the Lord is not shortened, and will prove, beyond a question, that God's miraculous interposition in behalf of Israel has not ceased, though it has been so long suspended. "I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make a great noise by reason of the multitude of men. The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and

* See Zech. viii. 13.

have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them."*

If this be the marvellous display of the Messiah's interference when his people are enduring the last tribulation, and if he shall personally appear to their relief and the final overthrow of their enemies, we need not be surprised if "their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed."† Indeed, we are expressly informed that, not only will God command the nations to acknowledge Jerusalem as the metropolis of a righteous world,‡ but that the nations of the earth will be so affected by the display of omnipotence on the behalf of Israel, that they will be insensibly drawn towards this centre-point of light and holiness: "And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the

* Mic. ii. 12, 13.

† Isa. lxi. 9.

‡ See Zech. xiv. 16—18.

nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you : for we have heard that God is with you.”*

It would be, my brethren, trifling with your time and patience to set about proving that these prophecies were not fulfilled at their restoration from Babylon. Those who maintain such an opinion must fall back on the process of allegorizing, or they must read history with very different eyes from what men in general have perused it. To talk of *a few stragglers*, come from Babylon with Judah, as being the accomplishment of prophecies that speak of nations and cities visiting Jerusalem; of the Gentiles acknowledging them as the blessed seed; of multitudes being drawn to the metropolis of a peaceful and righteous world; appears to us such unwarrantable “liberty of prophesying,” that I know not how men can satisfy their own minds with such explanations, or with confidence lay such views before the judgment of others. I trust, however, that the Scriptures we have adduced will commend to you the joyful prospect of Israel in the day of the Lord—which shall extend in the circle of blessedness to the remotest ends of the earth—according to my text, “The heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.” And

* Zech. viii. 21, 22, 23.

when shall this be? Let my text reply, "When the Lord shall build up Zion," and when "he shall appear in his glory." Truly we may conclude with the apostle, "If the fall of them be the riches of the world and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" "for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" *

One difficulty, I know, here occurs to the humble inquirer who is not satisfied with the crude explanations of the popular system. He inquires from us, how all these expected events are consistent with the scriptural account of the day of judgment? He further asks, does not the Bible teach us that all men shall stand before the great Judge at the last day, when the final separation shall take place, and the whole history of this world be concluded by the removal of the righteous to the heavenly glory and the banishment of the wicked to everlasting misery? Now I frankly confess that in endeavouring to dovetail all the prospects of the future kingdom of Messiah great difficulties will occur to the mind of the longest student of prophecy. And I further hold that we should exercise great modesty in trying to give a consecutive order to the events that are yet

* Rom. xi. 12—15.

in the womb of futurity. We have more to do with the great *outlines* of the prospect than with its minutiae—more with the vast importance of the promised *events* than with their allocation in the field of millennial blessedness. Thus we may firmly hold the restoration of the Jews—the rebuilding of the city and temple—the fertility of the renovated earth—the appearance of Messiah to Israel—his personal reign with his risen saints in the New Jerusalem. All these we may clearly discover in the page of inspiration, and yet we may not be able to see their *precise order*—how one event shall follow a preceding one, or how they will take place. Enough for us to hold the prominent features of the day of glory. Faith can leave the rest in the hands of Jehovah, who knows the end from the beginning, and who will work and none shall let him.

But here we cannot help protesting against a very common, and in our view, a very erroneous mode of contemplating the great and terrible day of the Lord, when he shall come to judge the world. It is commonly assumed that the day of judgment is a *mere single act* of passing sentence either of acquittal or condemnation. In fact, men seem to speak of it like an ordinary day of twenty-four hours, merely because the word *day* is used. We readily concede that God *could* judge

the inhabitants of the world in the same short space of time that he made the light; but the question is not about God's power (of which there can be no doubt in the mind of a Christian), but rather of his revealed mind touching the last period of judgment. Where, then, is it stated that that period will be so exceedingly short as men suppose? I know of no such statement. But I do read that "the saints shall judge the world,"* and therefore I conclude that the righteous are first acquitted before they sit with Christ as assessors upon his throne. I read also that "the field is to be joyful and all that therein is: then shall the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for he cometh to judge the earth."† And at that very time the command is given, "Say among the heathen the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously."‡ Jeremiah testifies, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall *reign* and prosper, and shall *execute judgment* and justice in the earth."‡ And St. Paul says, "That the Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom."§ Now all these passages plainly

* 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

† Ps. xcvi. 10. 13.

‡ Jer. xxiii. 5.

§ 2 Tim. iv. 1.

connect the judgment of the great King with his *continuous* reign of righteousness. In other words, they aver that in the kingly office there is a constant exercise of judicial power, as well as the possession of Royal state. We are, therefore, prepared not for a solitary act of judgment, but for a *period* of it; we expect to find the King of kings exercising all the authority of a Judge as long as the millennial kingdom shall last. Is there anything unscriptural in looking on the whole period of the millenium as the day of judgment, commencing with the acquittal of the saints, who shall enjoy the first resurrection, and ending with the condemnation of the raised wicked? I know of no solid objection, and, as far as I can see, this is the view held forth in the Word of God.*

But some will inquire, what shall become of the restored Jews and converted heathen? Will Israel remain a nation *for ever*, separate and distinct? I know many think they *will*, according to the promise strictly interpreted, “He shall reign over the house of Jacob *for ever*.” But then they must remember that these words *for ever* have sometimes a limited sense as well as an extensive; and I

* It is true that Rev. xx. 12 exhibits *all* standing before the judgment-seat. This may therefore be called, peculiarly, *the judgment*, but it is the closing scene of the last dispensation.

could well believe that here as in other passages the *perpetuity* is commensurate with its subject; or, in other words, that Christ will reign over Israel as long as they are a nation, without any further change or apostasy, and so far as they are nationally considered *for ever*, i. e., as long as they are Israel. But at the close of the reign of righteousness I believe the everlasting condition of each Israelite will be fixed, and that they will either be received into the assembly of the first-born, the elect of God, the glorified saints—or cast away into endless misery. Such I humbly conjecture to be the winding up all that concerns that peculiar kingdom which Christ shall possess at the restitution of all things. It may be that this earth shall be the habitation of the redeemed and glorified saints for all eternity. It may be that the *locality* of our heaven shall be found in this very world, purified from the taint of sin and the very breath of Satan; but on these conjectural grounds, strong as they are, I cannot dwell. We must be cautious of advancing where the compass of revelation ceases to guide; and we must exercise patience and humility, where God is pleased to refuse further light. All I have been anxious to prove is, that our views of Christ's kingdom on earth do not require a third coming of the Saviour or a separate judgment of the raised wicked and the mortal

inhabitants of the earth; that these objections have been chiefly mooted from an arbitrary view of the day of judgment, and that we are authorized to look for a *period* of judgment coincident with the reign of righteousness.

Did time permit, I might show you that these views are not modern or novel, but that they were firmly held and taught by the primitive Church before the tide of corruption set in; and by citing the testimonies of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I might prove that the *figurative* interpretation and idea of a mere spiritual millenium were the offspring of dark ages—when the Bishop of Rome began to claim supremacy, and, by sitting as a priest upon his kingly throne, endeavoured to *antedate* the glories of the true Melchizedec;—but these citations I must reserve for a short appendix. I cannot, however, help expressing my joy that the researches of a Newton and a Greswell have proved that antiquity is on our side, and that *novelty* cannot be charged against us. The voice of antiquity is so far useful, as it tends to corroborate our appeal to the word. All, indeed, that is ancient is not true, and men may be led to place an overweening dependence on Fathers and Councils. I fear that this has been lately exhibited by some anonymous writers of our own Church to a distressing degree. Still there is the opposite

error—the despising of ancient testimony—the neglect of consulting with the saints of former generations; for, though all that is ancient is not true, *all that is novel is certainly false*; and I must say, that if I could not discover any trace of the views we have propounded until the era of the Reformation, I would suspect that we were walking in the paths of novelty and conjecture, rather than in the “good old paths” of truth and righteousness. But now, whilst we make our appeal to the Bible, as the only standard of truth, we have the satisfaction of setting forth those very prospects that formed the joyful hope of the early Church, the support of many who were called to take their place amongst “the noble army of martyrs.”

III. I have very briefly to show *that the doctrine of Messiah's advent and kingdom is full of practical importance*. Very justly is this reserved for the concluding lecture of this course, being so extensive in its bearing on our holiness and expectations that we should not hastily dismiss the improvement which the range of subjects fitly suggests. I shall, therefore, only trespass on your patience by suggesting two inferences.

1. *That the day of glory seems rapidly hastening to us*. If I were asked, on what signs of the times I built this conclusion, I might

point to many, but I will confine myself to my text: "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.*" Where, observe, the sign given of the Lord's returning mercy to Zion, and of his appearance in glory, is the interest which his true servants take in her desolate condition. This is an interesting sign, because it shows, that the Church of God will awake to its long-neglected duty. How long has Zion sat desolate, and there has been none to comfort her! How long has Jerusalem been trodden down of the Gentiles, and there have been few to weep over it with the compassionate Son of Man! Alas! for the neglect which Christendom has shown to the seed of Abraham! Can we wonder that the Church should be so dead, and formal, and worldly? Can we be surprised that they who have not cried unto God for Israel's benediction should themselves not prosper in the spiritual life? But now we perceive a general attention awakened, we find Christians pleading for the favoured people,—we perceive men reading the page of prophecy, and giving Israel their rightful share of its promises. And sincerely do I rejoice that among all the branches of the Church Catholic

there is not one who occupies such a decided part of Missionary labours to Israel as our own hallowed fold. I love her because she sets forth God's truth with such fidelity. I cleave to her because she can trace her origin to apostolic authority. I unite with her members because they approach to God in a primitive and spiritual liturgy; but to these I add, that I am *increasingly* attached to her when I find God using her as the *pioneer* of the Gentile Churches, who will not only pray for the peace of Jerusalem, but "prepare the way of the people; cast up the highway; gather out the stones; and lift up a standard for the people."*

To the Jews our language now is, "O house of Israel, come ye and walk in the light of the Lord." We invite them to receive *now*, even now, the crucified Jesus as the true Messiah; we place before them his credentials from heaven, and we faithfully tell them, that if they *reject* this testimony, they shall die in their sins; we invite them now *to believe* that in the day of the Lord they may have a higher place than amongst the restored Jews—even be numbered amongst the glorified saints of the New Jerusalem; but still we do rejoice, however small or great the remnant now saved may be, that at last the Lord

* Is. lxii. 10.

will gather “the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah;” and that the very deep interest now taken in the prospect of this people is a pledge that the Lord’s purposes of mercy hasten to their accomplishment; that he is about to arise, and have mercy upon Zion; that he will soon appear in his glory; and that all shall then exclaim, “Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

2. We call upon you, my brethren, *individually to wait for the Son of God from heaven*. This is one striking characteristic of God’s faithful people, in opposition to a sleeping world or to the evil servants in the visible Church. To every ungodly man the day of Christ has no joyful prospect; he is either intoxicated with a draught of earthly pleasures, or he is occupied in smiting the household instead of comforting them—promoting schisms and divisions instead of cultivating unity. To all such, I say, the day of God is an unpleasing anticipation; and whilst he sees all things going on as they were in times past, he speaks peace to his carnal heart—“My Lord delayeth his coming.” Not so, true believers; they are said to *wait* for the Lord from heaven; to *look* for the Saviour; to *hasten* towards the day of God. And it is one important result of the view now given, that holding that Christ’s kingdom on earth will not anticipate

his coming, but synchronize with it; we are not so much to fasten the eye of hope on events and periods which must precede the advent of Messiah, but rather on *the advent itself*, and then expect the events to follow. We can thus occupy the true position of the Church of God. We can enter deeply into the words of our great Master, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

Church of the living God, awake, awake to the prospects of your high destinies! Lay hold firmly on the soul-comforting thought, "The Lord is at hand." Trim your lamps and gird up your loins, for the sound is echoing far and wide, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." His voice of comfort and power cheers us with the announcement, "Behold, I come quickly." Take up the words, and join with the host of heaven, the spirits of just made perfect, and the suffering Church on earth, in welcoming the approach of the King of kings, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Even so. *Amen.*"

APPENDIX TO LECTURE XI.

WITBY, in his treatise on tradition, has given the most decided testimony to the antiquity of these views. His general statement is, "The doctrine of the Millenium, or the reign of saints on earth a thousand years, is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants; yet it passed among the best of Christians *for two hundred and fifty years for a tradition apostolical*, and as such is delivered by many Fathers of the second and third centuries, who speak of it as the tradition of our Lord and his apostles, and of all the ancients who lived before them, who tell us the very words in which it was delivered, the Scriptures which were then so interpreted, and say that it was held by all Christians that were *exactly orthodox*."

He then proceeds to cite from the Fathers in proof of the following assertions:—First, "that the doctrine is delivered by the Fathers of the second and third centuries as a tradition received from the mouth of Christ and his apostles." Secondly, "they speak of it, not as a probable opinion, but as a thing they were certainly assured of." Thirdly, "they confidently cite, as plain assertors of this doctrine, the prophets of the Old Testament, and the sayings of our Lord and his apostles in the New." Fourthly, "that these Fathers do expressly teach that this doctrine of the Millenium was denied chiefly by heretics, and such as were deceived by them."* Under all these heads, the Doctor fully and *honestly* cites from the Fathers of the first three centuries,—I say *honestly*, because, as Witby was a determined opposer of the Millennial doctrine, it was candid in him giving such ample quotations from those with whom he differed; and in this way his testimony to the views of the ancient Church is invaluable.

* "Witby on Tradition," Part 1, pp. 74—79.

But of all modern writers, we are most indebted to Greswell, in his truly admirable work on the parables of our Lord, a work of deeper thought, more extensive research, and sounder exposition, than has appeared for many years. I would refer the reader to the first volume of this work for an ample discussion on the scriptural and historical testimonies for the doctrine of the Millennium; and I feel convinced that the unprejudiced mind will admire the tone and substance of these discussions.

In examining the historical testimonies, Mr. Greswell first cites the writers of the three first centuries, and then makes most judicious remarks on each testimony. I must refer the reader to the work itself for his comments, and be satisfied with merely citing a few of the witnesses in question. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, was, according to Irenæus, a hearer of St. John, and a friend and acquaintance of Polycarp. He wrote a work, according to Eusebius, in five books, entitled, "An Exposition of the Sayings of our Lord." This has been lost, but Eusebius the historian gives us an outline of its contents, which he thus sums up: "Among these things, Papias says, that there will be a period of a thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, the kingdom of Christ being to be established bodily on the earth." And Eusebius adds, "That he (Papias) prevailed with most of the clergy that lived after him to entertain it."

Justin Martyr, of Neapolis, in Palestine, who is supposed to have suffered martyrdom A.D. 146, gives the most unqualified testimony to the doctrine. In his dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, we find Trypho inquiring, If he really thought that Jerusalem would be built again? upon which he answers, "I am not such a wretch, O Trypho, as to say any thing but what I think. I professed to you, therefore, before also, that I indeed and *many others* think so, as I am sure you are aware that this thing will come to pass, but I told you on the other hand, even of those whose sentiments as Christians were sound and pious, that did not recognise it. I,

however, and any besides who are Christians of a *right way of thinking in all respects*, know that there shall be both a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years for Jerusalem built, and adorned, and enlarged, as the Prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and the rest of them profess ; forasmuch, too, as among us, also, a certain man called John, one of the apostles of the Messiah, foretold in a revelation which was made to him, that they who have believed in our Messiah shall pass a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that afterwards the *general*, and in one word, *everlasting* resurrection of *all* men, at once, with one accord and judgment shall take place ; what our Lord also said, that they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to angels, being children of the God of the resurrection." (Justin Martyr's "Opera. Hagæ Comitum," 1742, pp. 178, 179.)

"This passage," says Greswell, "renders a distinct testimony to Justin's belief upon all the principal points at issue between the Millenarians and their opponents—that there will be a resurrection of the faithful dead—a reunion of all, both Jews and Christians, under Christ at Jerusalem—a visible reign there for a thousand years ; and the like." He proceeds then to cite from Irenæus ; and Tertullian Nepos, a bishop in Egypt, as mentioned by Eusebius, is referred to, "as having demonstrated by irrefragible proof that Christ's kingdom would be a terrestrial one." Victorinus, Lactantius Apollinarius, and others, are cited as direct witnesses to the existence of this doctrine in the early Church. And these testimonies led Bishop Newton to make the following positive assertion, "In short, the doctrine of the Millenium was generally believed in the *three first* and *purest* ages ; and this belief, as the learned Dodwell has justly observed, was one principal cause of the fortitude of the primitive Christians ; they even coveted martyrdom in hopes of being partakers of the privileges and glories of the martyrs in the first resurrection." (See Dissertations on the Prophecies, on Rev. xx.)

LECTURE XII.

PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.

BY THE REV. W. TILSON MARSH,

INCUMBENT OF ST. MARY'S, LEAMINGTON PRIORS, CHAPLAIN TO THE MARQUIS
OF CHOLMONDELEY AND TO THE EARL OF CARNWATH.

[It will have been seen, by those who attended the course, that the Twelfth Sermon was advertised to be preached by Dr. Marsh. It was hoped that he would have preached this closing lecture; and it was understood to the last, by those who had the arrangement, that he would have been able to take it, but he was prevented by medical direction from attending, and his son supplied his place; respecting whose sermon, Dr. Marsh says, it fully embodies his sentiments and views. He adds farther:—"I am thankful that such a course has been preached at Liverpool, Leamington, and London, and I hope that other towns will follow the example. The Christian Church has too long overlooked a people, never forgotten by prophets or apostles, a people beloved for their fathers' sakes, and for whom the greatest mercies are in store. History will confirm what prophecy has foretold concerning Israel, that 'Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.' We cannot suppose that even neutrality should be considered as blameless in such a cause, when the attention of the Christian Church

is specially directed to the claims of the Jewish people, both from the pulpit and the press. The civil powers of Europe have declared the condition of the Jews to be worthy the consideration of every politician and every friend of humanity; it would be strange, therefore, if the Christian Church did not rise to the occasion and discharge her duty. They sustain great loss who do not give the literal as well as spiritual interpretation to the prophetic Scriptures. The restoration of Israel is a key to many passages, and with this key, they apply with double force to the experience of the Christian Church. To the eye of faith it lets in a flood of light on that glorious prospect, which will be opened to the whole Church, 'when the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;' for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? The time to favour Zion, yea, the set time is come, but the opportunity may soon be lost. Let us, therefore, apply ourselves instantly to the work, lest it should be said of us, as of the Ammonites and Moabites, 'Ye met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, as they were coming up out of the land of Egypt.' Rather let us pray and labour for the peace of Jerusalem, for 'they shall prosper that love thee.'

WILLIAM MARSH."

LEAMINGTON, *April 19.*]

DEUTERONOMY XXXII. 9, 10, 11, 12.

"For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the

apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings : so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him."

THIS inspired composition, called the Song of Moses, was written by the aged Lawgiver for the instruction of that people over whom he had so long presided, just before his death. It contains an historical account of their national origin, a narrative of the dangers through which they had passed, a prophecy of those which they were about to undergo, and closes with a reference to their future glory.

In speaking of the origin of the nation, Moses looks back into that far period when the limits of their various territories were appointed to the sons of Adam ; and in figurative, but intelligible words, declares that those bounds were set with reference to the children of Abraham, a generation then only existing in the Divine foreknowledge : but this fact marks the importance of the position which this people were purposed to take among their brother nations. " When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."

This was accomplished, when the ambition of the builders of Babel had been frustrated, and they were scattered over the surface of the earth, their link of union broken, and their medium of communication dissolved. Then the providence of God ordained that a portion of them should become the tenants of a land rich in every choice gift, and proportionate in extent and fertility to the numbers and the wants of his elect nation. This land they were to occupy for a season, until, having filled up the measure of their iniquities, and having fallen justly under the sweeping besom of the Divine vengeance, they should cede possession to the people for whom it was destined.

This arrangement of the wisdom of God may well demand our admiration, and yet it may at the same time excite surprise. Why, we may ask, should one nation be thus distinguished, and become the Lord's portion and the lot of his inheritance? Was there anything peculiar in this family of Jacob, that they should claim special attention and regard from God? No: we are told that it was of the free favour of God, "for he hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy." But having set his seal upon them, they became for ever his people; "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." For "the Lord's

portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

But we may press the inquiry still further, and ask, why should Jehovah select a portion, when the whole earth was his to its remotest corner, with its wide-spread human tenantry? To answer this question we must appeal to the revelation of the Divine plan as given in the Holy Scriptures.

From the beginning of time, it has been decreed that there shall be a Church, or body of men, selected out of the world which shall maintain the worship of the true God, in the midst of idolatry; this being its chief characteristic, that it is a *protesting* Church, lifting up its voice against "all that opposeth and calleth itself God." This witness was maintained in the earliest patriarchal age in that branch of the family of Adam, which descended from Seth, and perpetuated through a long line of patriarchs, until, at length, it is found in the person and family of Abraham, who, separated from his nation and kindred, became a wanderer in the land of Canaan. Amongst this man's descendants the Church continued for nearly two thousand years, and during this period its existence is made plain and its history is easy to be traced. First the

family, and then, as it multiplied, the nation of Israel, became the depository of the Divine Word, and their land “the place where God’s honour dwelt.” The sceptre of ecclesiastical, like that of civil power, not departing from Judah until Shiloh came, “when the Church enlarged her borders, and gathered into her fold a portion of the hitherto outcast Gentile world.” But God did not cast away his people utterly, for Jews and Gentiles, as individuals, were united in the new covenant, of which his blessed Son was the bearer to our rebellious world.

And, brethren, the true Church of God still exists: she stands forth “as a light in the world,” “a city set upon a hill,” unscathed by her numerous foes,” undismayed by the virulence and duration of the opposition made to her, and looking forward patiently to the day in the which her enemies, as being her Lord’s enemies, shall be subdued under her.

But it is necessary for us to distinguish between the literal and the spiritual Israel—the visible and the invisible Church. From the beginning there has been a portion of mankind selected by God as his own, “predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son.” As the visible Church consists of those who bear the outward marks of the call of God, impressed either in circumcision

or in baptism, so these bear upon their foreheads the seal of the eternal covenant, unseen, indeed, of men, but which can never be effaced; it is their claim to protection in time of danger, and their passport at the appointed period into the heavenly Canaan.

This is that body of which the Bible speaks so much, and to which it makes so many promises—the Church mystical, “which cometh up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved;” which looketh forth as the morning, “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners;” upon which the God of Jacob hath set his love, and concerning the members of it, he hath said, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” This is that body ecclesiastical, of which, in its present form we speak, when we use that language of our Communion Service,—“We thank thee that thou dost assure us of thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate of the mystical body of thy Son,” which is the blessed company of all faithful people. And this is that body, between the members of which there is an intimate union—a thrill of sympathy that knits them as with bands together. To this bond of sympathetic union we refer when

we include amongst the articles of our creed, “*the Communion of Saints.*” But there is another distinction between this Church invisible and the Church visible—the one is small, the other is great; the one is known, the other is unknown; the former is in the latter, though it forms it not; just as the people of Israel are declared to be “the Lord’s portion, and the lot of his inheritance.” And yet at one period of their history, out of the whole nation, only Caleb and Joshua, amongst the adults, “pleased God,” and “the rest fell in the wilderness” because they were disobedient. So is it with the invisible and the visible Church. Only “one of a city and two of a tribe” are members of the Church which God *loves*; whilst the whole city or tribe may belong to the Church which God *favours*.

Having thus observed the difference, we may trace some points of resemblance; that is, some particulars in which the one Church has shadowed out the other. For the literal Israel intimated the purpose of God with reference to the spiritual Church. For instance, the Mosaic ceremonial was instituted specially for the preservation of the people of Israel from idolatry, and no doubt can be entertained of its typical character. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul traces with an exact pen the parallel between the types of the

Jewish literal Church, and the antitypes of the spiritual Church as it was in his day; and in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, after having related to that Church the sins and the consequent troubles into which the literal Israel had fallen on its road to Canaan, he adds, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples,” or, as the word is, types, and “they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” And further, in the second Epistle to the same Church, in the third chapter, his argument is founded upon the resemblance which existed between the outward things of the literal and the inward things of the spiritual Church, for which resemblance we contend.

But the apostle does not leave the argument without pressing the most solemn consideration, for he says, “All are not Israel that are of Israel.” And again, “He is not a Jew which is one outwardly;” by which a distinction is drawn between the Churches literal and spiritual. And when, in addition, we find other passages, such, for instance, as our text, which make mention of the literal Israel in language which exactly corresponds with the expression used towards the chosen people of God in all times—the Church of the first-born—we are further strengthened in the view which has been taken, and can with

confidence trace, in God's dispensations towards his ancient people, the plan of his dealings with his chosen. And whilst we take not an iota from the promise made therein to Israel, we at the same time read our own marvellous privilege in the words of the song of Moses, "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

Let us, then, look at this promise for a moment in reference to ourselves, first asking of our own hearts the question—are we entitled to it? For we must remember, that "all are not Israel who are of Israel." "By their fruits ye shall know them," saith the Spirit of God. If we find not in our life and conduct the fruits of love and obedience, which characterize the true Israel, we may be sure that ours is not that circumcision of the heart which constitutes membership with the invisible Israel. We have not the seal of God the Father upon our souls; and in vain have we been baptized into the outward Church; in vain do we partake of its sacraments and ordinances; in vain do we join in its communion; in vain is our outward profession as Christians. With us God is not well pleased; and we are in danger of being overthrown. It is our wisdom, if such be the result of the examination, forthwith to seek admission, in fervent prayer and in the study of the Scriptures, whilst

the door of mercy is yet open, lest the time come when we may seek to enter in, and shall not be able, according to that saying of our Lord, “Verily I say unto you, many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door.”

But if, in the searching our heart, we find “the Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God,” then may we claim the privilege of these delightful words, “the Lord’s portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.”

The people of God are his portion in more than one sense. As the sons of Jacob were selected from the nations of the earth, and became the special objects of God’s care, so is it with the spiritual Israel. Selected out of a world that lieth in wickedness, plucked as brands from the burning, they are found of him whom they sought not; and, like the Jew of old, who must have often inquired, Why am I so distinguished above the people around me? the true Christian will ask, What is there in me that I am selected to bear the special marks of my heavenly Father’s love? And as the reasoning Israelite must have concluded that the choice which fell upon his nation was of God’s sovereign will, so doth the believer infer, that his

privileges are the free gift of God, as undeserved by him as they are bounteously bestowed upon him. Again, the Israelites were especially taught dependence upon God. Surrounded by tens of thousands of idolaters, who looked with an evil eye upon these favoured worshippers of the triune Jehovah, his dangerous position taught him to depend. And when year after year he found his land protected, and the enemies that sought to do him injury driven back by a handful of God's people, or, like Sennacherib's army falling by the stroke of an unseen arm, all these marvellous deliverances were proofs to the son of Israel that "the Lord's portion was his people: Jacob was the lot of his inheritance," and were strong inducements to confidence in God. And so it is with those frequent deliverances which you experience, ye children of the spiritual Israel. Feeling yourselves weak and your foes strong, the craft of more than human antagonists employed to harass and entangle you, you are led daily to acknowledge the true source from which protection comes, and in humble confidence to say—"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear what man shall do unto me." And as in the wanderings of the wilderness Israel received ample proof of the tender love as well as of the power of him who had made "the people his portion," in constant protection, in watchful care,

in the supply of their daily wants—when hungry, the feeding them with bread from heaven—when thirsty, the giving them water out of the flinty rock to drink : all according with those words of the song of Moses, “he found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness, he led him (or compassed him) about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye;” “he made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields, and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.” So he hath found you in the wilderness, ye people of God, weary with your wanderings through the cares and the pleasures of this desert world, he hath compassed you about as in a garrison, he hath instructed you in that wisdom which is from above, he keeps you as a man instinctively protects the most tender part of his frame, “as the apple of his eye;” he brings you into near communion with himself, he makes you to inhabit the high places of the earth; he feeds you, when your souls are hungry, with the manna of his ordinances, or, when parched by the hot winds of trial, he makes the flinty rock to produce honey and oil, the very sorrow to bring forth consolation; he gives you to drink of that river of joy, the full “streams whereof make glad the city of God.”

Mark, then, Israel's history, and read it in your own. In his many deliverances from the Egyptian, the Moabite, the Midianite, the Amorite, the Philistine, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, Israel received proof upon proof of the faithfulness as well as of the tender love and the power of Him who had made "the people his portion." He was afflicted, but Jehovah did comfort him; he was weak, but Jehovah was his strength. How applicable the figure in the text to the care extended both to the literal and the spiritual Israel: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them upon her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." You know the habits of the eagle, how tender its care over its young; day by day it brings them food till they are fledged; and when they are ready to take their first flight, how it teaches them with gentle firmness, stirring up the nest that they may take wing, and then fluttereth over them, watching with a mother's eye lest they should be harmed: and as the young bird with feeble effort vainly strikes the air, and descends, the mother bird expands her wings, and swiftly drops beneath it, bearing it in safety to the nest again. So the Lord guided and protected Israel. And so he educates his people now; he leads them

forth; "he stirs up the nest," that they may take wing; disturbing them by his chastening hand in the enjoyment of injurious pleasures, and thus their strength is tried; but when soon it fails, and they tremble towards the ground, he, who was watching from above, is beneath them, and upon the pinions of his power he bears them up again.

Lastly, as the children of Jacob were supported in their wearisome wanderings through the waste howling wilderness, by looking forward to rest in Canaan, so ye children of the spiritual Jacob, is your support in the expectation of "the rest which remaineth for the people of God," to which, unlike them, ye shall all attain; rest, sweet, safe, unbroken, eternal,—rest in God's love—rest in faith rewarded—rest in hope accomplished—rest in everlasting joy.

Thus, in observing the dealings of God with Israel, we may discover his purposes towards ourselves in the various dispensations of his providence. Accordingly, the twofold object of this course of Lectures has been to direct the attention of the spiritual to the literal Israel; first, that the former may take both encouragement and warning from the history of the latter, and also that it may receive the special blessing which God has promised, saying, "I will bless him that blesseth thee."

In the Introductory Lecture the importance of the subject was proved to you, and this was necessary, because doubts have been entertained upon this very point. But surely it must have tended to remove these doubts, when you viewed it in its various bearings, as setting forth in an especial manner the glory of God—as intimately affecting the Church of Christ, which owes so much to the Jew; and the realization of whose chief and supporting hope is in a measure dependent upon, because it is to be posterior to, the fulfilment of God's promise of restoration to Israel. Your attention was then drawn to the necessity of employing a consistent system of rules in the interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures, because the non-adoption of a consistent system has led to many mistakes. A passage has often been interpreted literally, and its immediate context spiritualized. Great confusion has resulted. The Christian Church has become unsettled in her opinions upon prophecy. The unbeliever has obtained an advantage, and God's ancient people have been deprived of the promises which undoubtedly belong to them.

Having adopted a system of rules, you opened the volume of prophecy at a remarkable passage in which the covenant made with Abraham is referred to. You beheld the germ of Israel's

honour, as far as the promise has received its accomplishment in the past history of that people, and the growth and expansion of the germ up to the time of the anticipated completion of the promise, when "in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

You then passed on to the covenant established with David, which enabled him to look through the vista of ages, and to see his children's children swaying the sceptre of Judah,—“David's Lord and yet his son” holding an undisputed and lasting dominion over a territory “undivided from sea to sea, from the river unto the ends of the earth.”

But ere these blessed expectations could be realized you beheld the tattered remnant of the divided kingdom, a train of captives, headed by their monarch, led to Babylon, and the harp of Judah silenced for seventy years. At the close of this period, you traced their return to Jerusalem. But in that emancipation was the promise realized which is recorded in the pages of Isaiah's prophecy, and which, when he proclaimed it, thrilled through the soul of the melancholy Jeremiah, and roused it to an unwonted joy? No; in that event you beheld no resemblance to “the coming up out of the land of Egypt.” All the people came up out of Egypt, whereas you saw only a portion returning from Babylon, and though “they dwelt,”

it was not "*safely*, in their own land," and you were led, therefore, to look onward to a day when "Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely;" and when they shall no more say, "The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them." At this period shall the new covenant of which you next heard, be fulfilled to the letter, when they shall all know the Lord, from the least to the greatest of them; for he will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more. But did you perceive this event to be at hand? No, you saw that another chasm must intervene.

The bitter remembrance of former captivities must be superseded by the endurance of a heavier bondage and intenser suffering. Accumulated sins, brought to a climax in the rejection of their Messiah, must call down the vengeance of a long-suffering God; and, accordingly, the curse which the nation as with one voice invoked in those suicidal words, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children," has now pressed heavy upon them for nearly eighteen hundred years. Surely, then, Judah's Church and nation, in its present condition, stands as a moral warning to all other Churches

and nations, as a monument upon which is written, “Be not high-minded, but fear.”

It has not been my privilege to hear this course of lectures, and therefore I may be in danger of trenching upon the subject-matter of the preceding sermons, and of re-stating what has been more effectively stated, but it would not be fitting to pass by the subject of moral warning to the Gentiles, without drawing from it some practical improvement. The question naturally suggests itself, In what state is the Gentile Church at the present day? For eighteen hundred years she has been grafted upon the stock of God’s Church, and rich has been the supply of nutriment afforded. The Holy Spirit has been promised without measure; great exemptions as well as vast privileges have been granted. She has been delivered “from that fear of death” which held the ancients “all their lifetime subject to bondage.” She has been freed from a burdensome ceremonial; she may worship her God when and where she will. The whole earth is now an altar consecrated by the sacrifice thereupon of the Lamb of God.

What use has she made of these advantages? Ecclesiastical history tells a mournful tale of truth corrupted and truth neglected; and what says the testimony of our own day? The once famous Churches of the East, the glory has departed from

them; the Churches of Africa are well-nigh extinct; the lamp burns dim upon the altars of the Greek; the Latin is defiled with superstition and with blood; the Lutheran Church sleeps the dull cold sleep of Neology; the last of the orthodox Helvetic Churches has fallen. And in what condition is England's Church? Roused, indeed, from her long slumbers, but still oppressed with the lethargy which so long deadened her faculties, and prostrated her strength. If the cry were now to go forth, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him," which one of the virgin Churches of Christendom could summon her members together, and obey the call? Surely the fate of Judah's Church is a warning voice that speaks to us as if from the tomb, and saith, "If he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing?"

But the penalty inflicted in the entombment of Judah and Israel is an evidence that these Churches shall rise again. As was proved to you, the literal fulfilment of the threatening implies the literal fulfilment of the promise. And the promise is, "I will open your graves, O my

people, and cause you to come out of your graves." Here is the ceasing of the penalty upon which immediately the restoration follows, "And bring you into the land of Israel." And the conversion succeeds to the restoration according to this prophecy of Ezekiel, "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit within you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord." In her return Israel shall discover the unchangeableness of God's purpose towards her, and shall acknowledge, in the changing circumstances of her history, in her wanderings and in her settlings from the coming up out of Egypt until the restoration from all the lands, "that the Lord alone did lead her, and there was no strange god with her."

Is there not something in the thought of a long-exiled and deeply-injured people regaining their lost independence and ceasing from their sorrows, which must interest every philanthropic heart—something in the thought of a people long alienated from their God, almost without a hope for eternity, returning to the fold of safety, and whilst weeping prostrate before the cross of him whom they have rejected and crucified, being

received again into his love, which must give joy to every Christian heart? Surely if our pity has been called forth in thinking upon the past woes of Israel, our sympathies should all be drawn out in the expectation of her future joy, and especially as in that joy the Christian Church shall participate. "If the casting away of them have been the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" If one dearly beloved, whose remains had long mouldered into dust, should suddenly rise and enter the circle of mourners whom he had left behind, would he not be greeted? And when the spiritual grave of Ezekiel's vision shall give up her dead, shall not her sister Church rejoice that Israel is restored to her? "The Gentiles shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising." But there is another sense in which these words shall be fulfilled, and this is their primary meaning.

Missionary labour, what has it yet effected? much in proportion to the effort made, but nothing in comparison of the extent of its field of labour. It is the duty of the Christian Church, in obedience to her Lord's commands, to preach the Gospel to every creature. But she must wait for full *success* till her Lord return and build up Zion. Then when shall Jerusalem once more become the

Metropolitan Church, in a fuller sense than has yet been realized, “the law shall go forth from Mount Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem,” and a sin and trespass buried world—whose moral restoration has long been attempted in vain—shall leap at once to life: so shall “the receiving” of the literal Israel be to the Gentiles as “life from the dead.”

Is that time far distant? Of the day and the hour knoweth no man; but this the reader of God’s Word knows, that the times of the Gentiles are rapidly drawing to a close, for the blast of the sixth angel’s trumpet is already heard—the waters of the Euphrates are drying up “that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared.” But a little while and the full stream flowed through them—to-day a man may almost pass through dryshod. The Mahomedan power is dependent for its existence upon the will of Christendom.

What practical lesson may we learn? The Jews who have long been with us may soon leave us. Let us improve the time whilst they remain. And now a special opportunity is afforded. The spirit of inquiry, which has slumbered for ages, awakens. The prejudices which have existed are subsiding. One of the most important results of the late Mission from the Church of Scotland has been the discovery of the *accessibility* of the Jews.

When the Mahomedan, or the Armenian, the Greek, or the Roman Christian will not listen, the Jew will often seek with eagerness at the mouth of the missionary information and instruction in Christianity. Shall we not take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded? If there be any gratitude in the Christian Church towards the Jew, as the keeper of the records of truth and the main witness to the facts upon which her faith depends—if there be any regard towards the people of “the Lord’s portion”—if there be love for the kinsmen after the flesh of her absent Lord—if any desire for the salvation of immortal souls,—let the Christian Church now exercise that charity towards the Jew, which in the days of St. Paul a few exercised towards her.

The signs of the times are urgent upon us—what we do, to do quickly. Shall the words which have been spoken in this place be altogether fruitless? The expectation of a miraculous interference should not deter us from attempting the conversion of individuals. “Blindness in part only hath happened to Israel.” Our duty, therefore, is to use the means and bring into the fold as many as the Lord our God shall call, preaching to them Christ crucified as Peter did when three thousand were convinced at the day of Pentecost; or, as Paul did when he entered into their

synagogues and taught in every place. We shall then have discharged our duty, and may safely leave the result with God.

Upon ourselves, as the ministers of God's Word, we feel that this subject bears most practically. If it can be proved, as we believe it has been satisfactorily proved in this course of lectures, that the prospects of the Jewish people occupy a prominent place in the volume of prophecy, that the Scriptures from beginning to end teem with promises of their restoration and glory, then are we led to the conviction, that it is incumbent upon us not to omit the subject in teaching our people, but to give it the same prominence which it holds in the estimation of the Spirit of God. If we speak not to the Church of that people, concerning whom prophets and apostles were wont to make mention—if we are careless of the state in which they remain, for whom as a nation as well as individuals, the first Christians felt so high a regard and laboured so zealously,—we place our own system of teaching in complete contrast with the ancient system, and we are losing in the modern Church one of the distinguishing features of primitive Christianity: and, as with the clergy, so, also, with that important part of the Christian community, the laity; if it be the duty of the former it must be also the duty of the latter to

assist the Jew, to teach him by precept as well as example what Christianity is, and to endeavour to win him over to an appreciation of principles as pure as they are effective upon the conduct—to teach him, in a word, that Christ died for man, that man might live to Christ.

In conclusion, should there be any of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob present, they will permit me to address them. Sons of Israel, to whatever sect you belong, we desire to see you reading your own Scriptures. To Moses and the prophets is our appeal. Read them that you may know what great things are in store for you. Your nation has been both persecuted and neglected, but the Christian reformed Church would no longer persecute or neglect you. She seeks to pour the oil of gladness into your wounded hearts, and to make what amend is in her power for her past unkindness. She knows that the corruptions of Christianity and the crimes of its professors in past times have been a stumbling-block in your way, but she would show you what true Christianity is, as exemplified in the lives as well as in the creed of its disciples. She would prove to you that her efforts in your behalf correspond with her “heart’s desire and prayer to God for you,” which is, “that you

may be saved," being brought to a knowledge of your own state before God; that you have been, like your fathers, disobedient, but that there is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness in the blood of one who has died for you, even your own Messiah. And the Christian Church seeks to prepare you for that event of which your Scriptures speak by the mouth of the Patriarch Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." To that happy era we like yourselves are looking forward; our joy shall be consummated only when yours is complete. It must follow upon your restoration to the Holy Land. You will have, it is true, a day of trouble and of darkness after your return, for the words of Zechariah must be fulfilled: "All the nations shall be gathered against Jerusalem to battle;" excited by a spirit of jealousy, they shall seek to deprive you of your regained honours. But then, when your distress is greatest, you shall be nearest to the rescue, "For the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle," and your nation shall take up the language of King David, and say, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him."

Sons of Israel, that God whom your nation

shall invoke, is Jesus of Nazareth, over whose cross was the superscription written, “King of the Jews.” And the King of the Jews shall come as the Judge of the nations, and the thrones shall be set, and the books shall be opened, and you as well as the Gentiles shall be judged at that day. Then shall the friends of Jesus of Nazareth—his true, not his merely professing friends—be justified before angels and men. And they shall live and reign with the Lord God omnipotent for ever and ever.

THE END.

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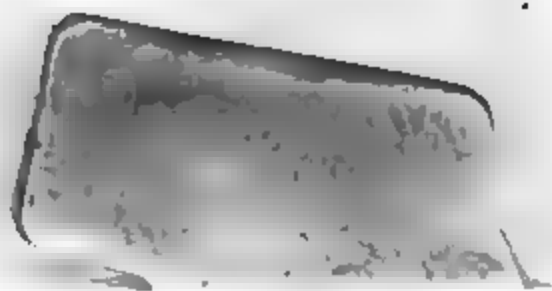
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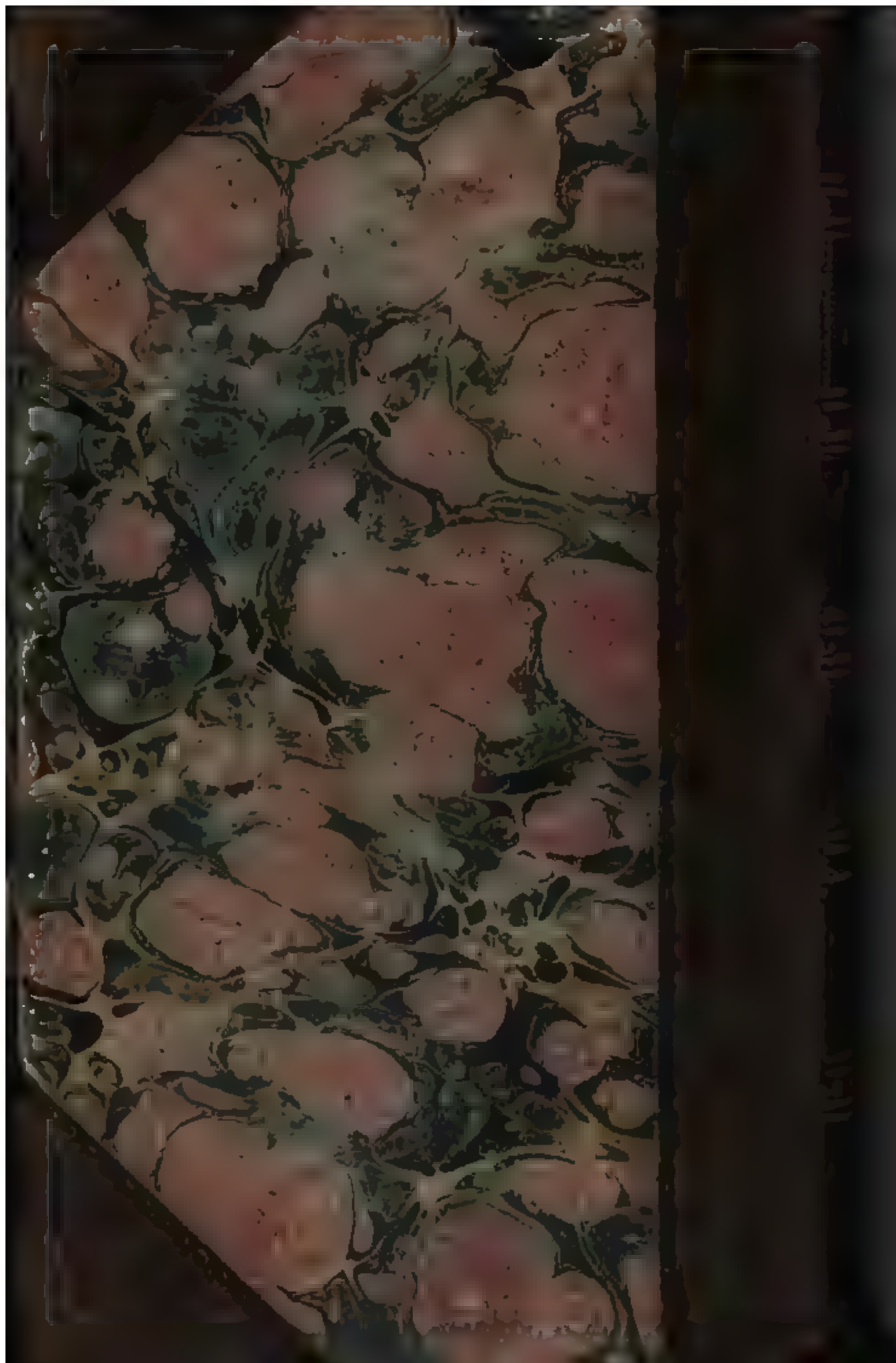
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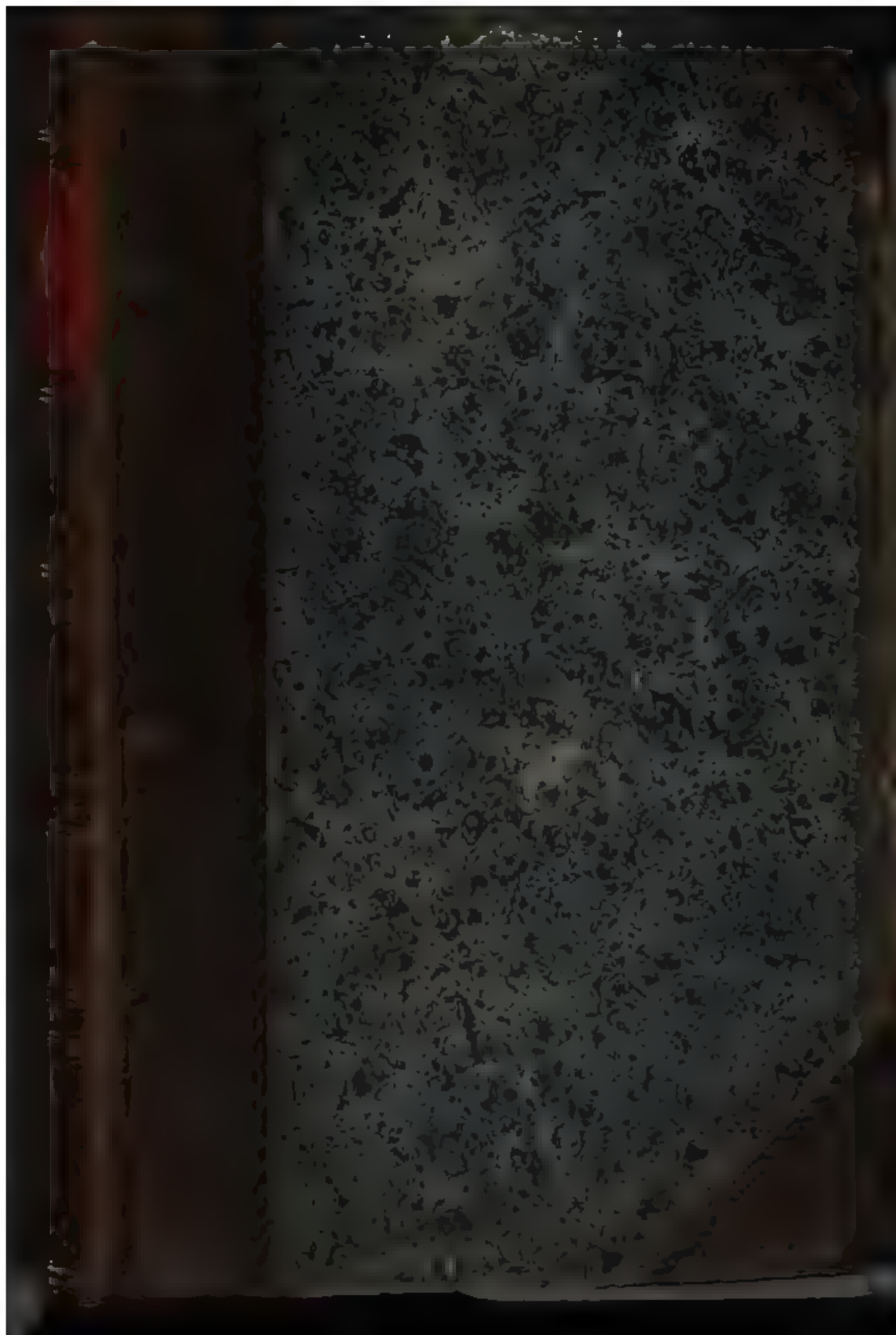
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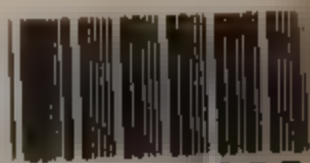
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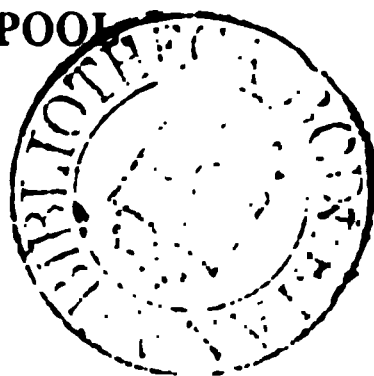
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VIEWED PRACTICALLY,

IN A COURSE OF LECTURES DELIVERED AT
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PREFACE.

THE FOLLOWING COURSE OF LECTURES was undertaken at this remarkable crisis in the political state of Europe, and at a season when “the remnant of the dispersed of Judah, and outcast Israel,” have excited a very deep interest in the public mind, with the design of shewing the important place they occupy in the word of God, and the scriptural grounds there are for believing that their redemption draweth nigh : that seeing their restoration will be accompanied with great blessings to the righteous, and with dreadful judgments upon the ungodly, many may, by the Divine blessing, be stirred up to earnest prayer and active diligence in their behalf, and the hitherto negligent be led to embrace the present interval of mercy, and turn to the Lord ere “the days of vengeance” come.

It has been the earnest desire of those who have united in delivering these Lectures, to avoid all fanciful or speculative interpretations of Scripture ; and, as the Lord enabled them, to impress upon their hearers His striking warning, “ Behold I come as a thief ; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments,” that, “ standing with their loins girded about and their lamps burning, they may be like unto men that wait for their Lord when he shall return from the wedding,” that “ when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately.”

St. Bride's, Liverpool, Jan. 1841.

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2 SAM. vii. 18, 19.—“Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord; and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?”

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ISAIAH ix. 6, 7.—“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,

The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

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PSALM lxxxix. 30-34.—“If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”

PART II.—301.

THE INTRODUCTION OF “THE TIMES OF THE
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ZACHARIAH'S INSPIRED HYMN.**

**BY THE REV. WILLIAM FREMANTLE, M.A.,
MINISTER OF WEST-STREET EPISCOPAL CHAPEL.**

LUKE i. 76-79.—“ And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of of peace.”

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**BY THE REV. ALEXANDER R. C. DALLAS, M.A.,
RECTOR OF WONSTON, HANTS.**

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**BY THE REV. ALEXANDER R. C. DALLAS, M.A.,
RECTOR OF WONSTON, HANTS.**

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**BY THE REV. JAMES HALDANE STEWART, A.M.,
INCUMBENT OF ST. BRIDE'S, &c.**

**2 PETER iii. 11, 12.—“ Seeing then that all these things shall be
dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy
conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto
the coming of the day of God.”**

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE:

EXPLANATORY OF THE

DESIGN OF THE COURSE;

&c. &c.

LECTURE I.

EXPLANATORY OF THE DESIGN OF THE COURSE;
—OF THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ACCURATE
KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES;
—AND OF THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THEIR STUDY
SHOULD BE CONDUCTED.

BY THE REV. JAMES HALDANE STEWART, M.A.

2 PETER i. 19.

*We have also a more sure word of prophecy ; where-
unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light
that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn,
and the day-star arise in your hearts.*

It is a generally admitted fact that we are living at a very eventful period of time. The last century closed with one of the most astonishing Revolutions which the annals of History have ever recorded. This was followed by a most destructive war,—a war in which every state in Europe was more or less engaged. After five-and-twenty years of dreadful carnage, peace was at length proclaimed: but instead of producing a state of

settled tranquillity, it has rather seemed like the lulling of the storm—the deceitful calm which precedes the sweep of the hurricane. For the principles of infidelity and insubordination, which were so widely disseminated during the season of revolutionary bloodshed, left the minds of men in a most feverish state—a state resembling an underground volcano, breaking forth in infidel societies, in plots and treasonable conspiracies, or in acts of open rebellion against lawful authority.

These popular tumults which, like the waves of the troubled sea, are continually “casting up mire and dirt,” have been accompanied by a very prevalent feeling throughout the world, that some great change is at hand. “Men’s hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth.”*

In this state of anxious uncertainty, if we apply to persons of worldly wisdom, or to sagacious statesmen for relief: if we ask them to suggest an effectual remedy, or to provide some sure defence against these apprehended dangers, they can make no reply. They are constrained to confess that the present state of the world confounds alike the philosopher and the politician: that “the wisdom of their wise men is come to

* Luke xxi. 26.

naught, and the understanding of the prudent has perished.”

In this state, however, in which the wisdom of the world is foolishness, and their boasted idols are put to silence, the Lord has provided an all-sufficient guide for his people ; for as the inspired Apostle St. Peter declares in my text, “ We have a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.” For from the fall of man to the present hour, the prophetic word of God has been the lamp which he has graciously provided for our benighted race.

For such was the grace and mercy of God, that while for their transgression he dismissed our first parents from Paradise, He would not send them forth without this cheering light to guide their steps. This was his gracious declaration, when the Serpent had beguiled Eve, and Adam had hearkened unto the voice of his wife, and had eaten of the forbidden fruit ; God said unto the Serpent, “ I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” *

* Genesis iii. 15.

This was "the sure word of prophecy," by which God in his mercy lightened the dreary path of our offending parents; and this forms one of the great peculiarities of his revelation to fallen man, that it is PROPHEPIC revelation: that as the Lord was pleased to encircle the earth with a firmament in which he placed the great luminaries, that they might "declare his glory" by their display of his Almighty power; so he has set over man the canopy of prophecy, that he might, by this manifestation of his foreknowledge and overruling providence, give another incontestible proof of his Deity and God-head. The lights placed in the heavens manifesting his Deity to the sense; the lamp of prophecy making a similar display to the minds of his intelligent creatures.

For it is God alone who can predict future events. Man, weak fallible man, cannot say what a day or even a moment may bring forth; but He whose broad eye looks through eternity, and with whom past, present, and future are as one, can with the same facility foretel events which he has purposed to perform in the most distant ages, that he can make known any trivial occurrence of the passing hour. This truth is thus sublimely declared by the prophet Isaiah, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; declaring the end from the beginning, and from

ancient times the things which are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” *

It has therefore been by prophecy that God has been pleased frequently to reveal his will to man ; that, making known his purpose by a mode which he alone can accomplish, his messages might bear the stamp of Deity : and herein He has shewn His manifold wisdom by giving a right direction to one of the strongest propensities of our nature.

For in one sense it may be said that every person is a prophet. For it is as natural to man to anticipate the future, as to reflect upon the past. He cannot content himself, like those lower animals who lie down in the green pastures, satisfied with their present ease. He looks back to his past course ; he turns his eye to his future expectations. Even the Infidel, who denies that the inspired prophecies are the word of God, is himself a prophet—a false prophet indeed, but still he prophesies :—for he declares that Death is an eternal sleep : that when the body dies, the soul dies ; that there is no judgment to come ; no state of blessedness for the righteous ; no place of torment for the wicked.

Thus, like that evil Spirit by whom “ he is en-

* Isaiah xlv. 9, 10.

snared," he tries to deceive himself, and to deceive others, by being a false prophet. For it was Satan's lying prophecy, "Ye shall be as God's, knowing good and evil," which deprived us of our inheritance. It is the sure word of prophecy, spoken by the God of truth himself, which provides for its final restoration; "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be thy plagues. O Grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." The wisdom of God therefore, in making known his purposes in the prophetic form, are strikingly visible; for not only does this mode stamp the Divine authority upon his oracles, but guards man from a most dangerous propensity—that of listening to every shallow infidel, or to every self-constituted prophet, who would deceive him to his everlasting ruin.

Among the foremost of these Divine Oracles, we may place the inspired prophecies regarding the Jews.

They have been "a wonderful people from the beginning:"—a people at one time enjoying the greatest prosperity, basking in the sunshine of the Divine favour; God's "peculiar treasure above all people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." *

* Exodus xix. 5, 6.

Having in their temple the Schechinah, or the symbol of the Divine Presence; and the Lord saying of Zion, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it." **SUCH THEY WERE.** Now, alas! they are a nation "meted out and trodden down;" a by-word and a proverb among all nations; "without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, and without an ephod:"* having no governor of their own; no independent civil polity; no regular priesthood; no place where they can perform the prescribed ceremonies of their religion; but as they have been described—

" Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest?
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country, Israel but the grave."

And yet, notwithstanding this their degraded state; notwithstanding there is scarcely a country from which they have not at some time been expelled, or in which they have not suffered dreadful persecution; still they have been so marvellously preserved, that while other nations have entirely perished, or been amalgamated with other nations, to this day they remain a distinct race: still valuing themselves upon their descent; still

* Hosea iii. 4.

retaining their attachment to the land of their forefathers; and still looking forward with anxious expectation to their return thither. So much is this their character, that according to their own striking saying, "PERSECUTION CANNOT CHANGE US: OPPRESSION CANNOT CRUSH US: TIME ITSELF CANNOT DESTROY US."

These peculiarities have made them the theme of the historian, and the admiration of the philosopher. It is however a far, far higher cause which has drawn the hearts of sincere Christians towards them; namely, that "Salvation is of the Jews;"* that God has been pleased so to bind up the felicity of the nations with the prosperity of his ancient people, that it is when the Lord "shall return to Jerusalem with mercies," or when "he shall set his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people, assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth;" then, then it is, "that the wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the leopard lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and fatling together; and a little child shall lead them; and then shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."†

* John iv. 22.

† Isaiah xi. 6—12.

The great mistake which has been made, both by Jews and Christians, has been to consider the religion of the Old Testament, and of the New, as two different religions ; whereas in fact they are one and the same ; with this distinction, that the faith of the pious Jews, previously to the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, was fixed upon a Saviour who was to come. The faith of Christians, on the other hand, rests upon a Saviour who has once “ visited us in great humility, and who will come again in glorious majesty.”*

This Saviour, Abraham, the great progenitor of the Jewish nation, saw by faith.† And to him the promise was made that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. He was to be the Father of nations ‡—“ the heir of the world.”§ This was the first great unfolding of the germ of prophecy given to our first parents in the garden of Eden. A still further development was made by Nathan the prophet, when he was sent to David with this gracious message, “ I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his

* Collect for the First Sunday in Advent.

† John viii. 56.

‡ Genesis xii. xvii. xxii.

§ Romans iv. 13.

kingdom for ever.”* This message, connected with the prophetic Psalms, which David was inspired to write, concerning him who was both his Lord and his Son, shew that the general promise made to Abraham was to be fulfilled in Judah’s king: that “His name shall endure for ever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him. All nations shall call him blessed.”

Thus stood the purpose of God when Solomon ascended the throne. All nations were to be blessed in the Son of David. “In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him.”† The blessings revealed in these animating prophecies, in which every inhabitant of the earth had an interest, were suspended, as later inspired writings make known, by the sins of Solomon and his successors, and the great body of the tribes of Israel and Judah. For, although God had chosen the twelve tribes of Israel for his people, and granted them such extensive blessings, He was bound, as the moral governor of the universe, to manifest to his creatures that “it was an evil and

* 2 Samuel vii. 12, 13. Psalm ii. xvi. xxii. xlv. lxviii. lxxii. cx. &c.

† Psalm lxxii. 7—11.

a bitter thing to sin against the Lord.” He therefore first cut off the ten tribes from the kingdom of Judah. Then he delivered them up into the hands of Shalmanezer. Then Judah was taken captive into Babylon, and though the Lord restored her for a season, when she had “filled up the measure of her iniquity” by crucifying the Lord of Glory, He sent the Romans to destroy their temple, possess the holy city, and carry the Jews captive into all lands. As our Saviour had foretold, God took the kingdom from them, and gave it to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”* So that whilst they lost their country and their civil rights, they were deprived of all their spiritual privileges. They had no longer the symbol of the Divine Presence among them; no longer was the administration of the Church of God entrusted to their care. No longer were they called upon by devout Gentiles for instruction in the knowledge of the true God; but with the Old Testament scriptures in their hands, and living in countries favoured with the full light of the Gospel, they grope, alas! like blind men in the midst of the noon-day light!

But has God cast off his people? Is his covenant with Abraham his friend cancelled? Has he made void his oath to David? Were the mes-

* Matthew xxi. 43.

sages sent to comfort the mourning captives 'only vain words? By no means; "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew."*

This was his gracious answer to Zion's complaint, when she said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."†

Many, many, glorious predictions, some of the principal of which will hereafter be brought before you, shew that "the Lord will return to Zion, and have mercy upon his afflicted—that the days of her mourning shall be ended, and her God shall be her glory."‡ This sure word of prophecy also makes known, that as the Jews endured almost unheard-of sufferings, when Jerusalem was taken, their temple destroyed by the Romans, and the kingdom of God given to another nation, so that the Lord will mark their restoration, by executing great and sore judgments upon their enemies, upon the apostate Gentiles, and upon those "who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." That he will then also

* Romans xi. 2.

† Isaiah xlix. 14, 15.

‡ Isaiah lx. 19, 20.

grant special tokens of his favour to those who love Jerusalem, and who mourn for her : causing his faithful people among the Gentiles “to milk out, and to be delighted with the abundance of her glory.”*

It is the light which “the sure word of prophecy” casts upon these great events connected with the very remarkable times in which we live, which has given rise to the present course of Lectures. For, without pretending positively to affirm that the events now occurring are those which the prophetic scriptures declare are to be the immediate fore-runners of the time appointed for their deliverance, every candid observer of the signs of the times will confess that the present aspect of the Jews, and of Christian, Mahommedan, and Heathen nations, is so singular, that it becomes every prudent man “to stand upon his watch tower ;”† or to be ready for whatever visitation of His providence it may please Him to appoint, who “doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ?”‡

For regard for a moment this general outline of the present state of the Jews.

* Isaiah lxvi. 10—14.

† Habakkuk ii. 1.

‡ Daniel iv. 35.

Whilst the late most unjust persecution of them at Damascus has created a general sympathy in their favour, the attention of various classes of Society has been particularly directed towards them. The newly adopted steam communication with India has brought Judea before the mercantile world. The facilities afforded for visiting Palestine have opened Jerusalem to scientific travellers, whose narratives have so interested the literary circles, that the Jews now occupy a very prominent place in many of our leading publications.

Again, the differences subsisting between the Sultan of Turkey and his Egyptian vassal have made Syria a very anxious subject to politicians; since it is upon the issue who shall possess the land which God gave to Abraham, and to his seed for ever, that the question of peace or war depends? Whilst the Jews are thus presented to merchants, literary men, and politicians, Jerusalem has “come into the minds”* of many of the Lord’s faithful servants, “who take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.”†

Almost every Protestant state is using some scriptural means for their conversion, and, as is generally known, a clergyman ordained as a mis-

* Jeremiah li. 50.

† Psalm cii. 14.

sionary by our highest ecclesiastical authorities, and protected by Her gracious Majesty's consul, now for the first time appointed to the Holy Land, has commenced the foundation of a regular place of worship upon Mount Zion, in which divine service is intended to be performed according to the liturgy of the Church of England.

Whilst God, in his overruling providence, is thus drawing the attention of the more enlightened classes among the Gentile nations to the Jews, there is a very unusual stir among themselves. A confident expectation has risen up among them of the almost immediate advent of their Messiah. Many of them are desirous of proceeding to Jerusalem, that they may be upon the spot at his coming. A very remarkable spirit of inquiry prevails among them. Many are casting off the vain traditions of the Talmud, and diligently reading the books of Moses : others are willing to converse with Christians upon the claims of our blessed Lord as their true Messiah : while some of the ancient men among them are saying, " We shall die Jews, but our children will be Christians."

Such is the aspect which the Jews present, at the very time that the Gentile world is in so critical a state, almost every one calling out, " It is

impossible things can continue as they are. There must be a change."

It is when this accumulation of peculiarly interesting events, all occurring at the same moment, is before us—when also no human being has in himself sufficient wisdom or foresight to point out a course of safety—it is, my beloved friends, in these circumstances that we are desirous to direct you to "the sure word of prophecy, as unto a light shining in a dark place."

I can confidently say, in the names of my much esteemed clerical brethren, who take a part in these Lectures, as well as my own, that we have not the slightest wish to occupy your time with any mere fanciful or speculative interpretation of the Scriptures; but "speaking the words of truth and soberness," to set before you the great outlines of the divine purpose towards the Jews; that seeing this purpose you may fall in with the divine counsels, and thus, through the grace and mercy of God, escape the judgments coming upon the ungodly, and partake of the great and glorious privileges which will hereafter be the portion of the true followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Yes, my beloved friends and brethren, this is our heart's desire, even YOUR SALVATION.

The more effectually to promote the object, having offered these introductory observations, permit me now to request your attention to a brief statement, shewing the importance of an accurate knowledge of the Prophetic Scriptures, and of the spirit in which their study should be conducted.

May the Holy Spirit vouchsafe us his divine aid. May he “give to us a right judgment in all things,” that “receiving the truth in love we may find mercy in that day.”

I proceed then to set before you some of the reasons which manifest the importance of an accurate knowledge of the Prophetic Scriptures.

The first of these, and one of vital importance, is, that such a knowledge affords one of the best means of settling, strengthening, and firmly establishing our belief in the Bible as the inspired word of God.

For these prophecies include a period of which above three thousand years have already passed; and yet they foretel events which had no appearance of taking place at the time the predictions were made; and this in such a regular succession, and with such minute circumstances, that the candid inquirer after Truth, comparing these prophecies with the events afterwards recorded in the sacred Scriptures, or made known by the most

accredited ancient histories, cannot but confess that they are indeed the inspired word of God.—It is impossible that any mere man could have foretold and accomplished such a succession of events as these prophecies make known. They were in truth written, as they profess to be, by the servants of the Lord Jehovah ; or, as St. Peter declares, “the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” It would occupy too much time to enter into a minute proof of this, and therefore I only refer you to those wonderful chapters, the 26th of Leviticus, and the 28th and 32nd of the book of Deuteronomy.

In these prophetic portions the eventful history of the Lord’s ancient people is drawn from the days of Moses to the present time ; and this with such an accuracy that no infidel who has ever made the attempt, has been able to give a reasonable ground for his unbelief : he has been forced to resort to some subterfuge for doubting the inspiration of that which as a sentient being he could not deny.

And is not this a great advantage ? In a day when infidelity stalks abroad—when men are not ashamed to utter, before large assemblies, those

* 2 Peter i. 21.

blasphemies which were formerly whispered in retired corners ; is it not an advantage to be able to say, Here is a book which proclaims “ Glory to God in the Highest ; peace on earth, and good will to man,” the truth of which nothing can shake. But resting my soul upon Him of whom it treats from the beginning to the end, I need not be afraid of evil tidings ; no, nor feel the least dismay, even when “ the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.”*

Further, an accurate knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures not only affords one of the best means of assuring us of the truth of the inspired volume, but it may be said to be the key to a right understanding of its contents. When no attention is paid to the purpose of God, as revealed in these sublime books, but when they are viewed as mere detached visions, from which the reader may cull out a verse here and there at pleasure, the difficulty of giving a just and sound interpretation is found to be great. When, however, we take this key, and patiently wait for His guidance, “ who gives knowledge to the simple, and wisdom to those who have no understanding,” each portion

* 2 Peter iii. 10.

of the word of God falls into its proper place. That which belongs exclusively to the Jews, that which regards the Gentiles, and that which is common to them both, are distinguished. There is no fear, that the Gentiles will be robbed by giving Judah her portion, neither will there be any desire that she should have all the curses and we all the blessings; for it will be seen, that the more liberally we treat the Jews, the more shall we enrich ourselves. I only hint, however, at this benefit, as it will be fully considered in the next Lecture.

I pass therefore to a third reason, namely, that a knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures is among the best means of obtaining just and glorious views of the character of God, of the person and work of our blessed Saviour, and of the principles and practice upon which the happiness of man is founded. For it should always be borne in mind, that the prophets held two offices. The one was that of preachers to the people: hence we find the apostle Paul frequently using the word prophesying in the sense of preaching.* The other was that to which the term prophesying is usually applied; namely, the foretelling future events. These offices were united in the prophets with the

* See 1 Corinthians xiv.

greatest wisdom. For the object nearest to their hearts was, as that of the preachers ever should be, to benefit the persons they addressed, “to turn the sinner from the error of his way,” “to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees,” and to build up the established believers in their most holy faith.

For the attainment of this object, the display of the character of God, the making known the person and work of Messiah, and declaring the great truths of religion, were essentially necessary. The strictly prophetic word, or the delivering of the messages containing blessings upon the righteous, and judgments upon the impenitent, were only aids to their ministry,—enforcements of those principles and that practice which they desired their hearers to follow. True it is that after ages received the advantages of their prophecies, “when the Spirit of Christ which was in them testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that shall follow,” but not from their direct prophecies only, but likewise from their animated discourses. So much is this the case that if we would lay our hands upon those parts of the Holy Scriptures which most clearly make known to us the character of God, and those principles which are the glory of our religion, we must turn either to the writings of the Old Testament pro-

phets, or to those predictions which our Lord himself delivered when upon earth, or which after his ascension he made known to his servants the apostles.

Again : an accurate knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures is important for this further reason, that in a peculiarly striking manner they afford instruction upon those truths which enter into the every-day concerns of life, namely, God's moral government, and his providential ordering of all events, so that "not even a sparrow falls to the ground without his permission ;" but as our Lord says, "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."*

For the attentive reader of the prophetic Scriptures will not only see that the great affairs of nations are under the divine controul, but that these great affairs very frequently owed their birth to some very minute circumstances ; such is the case in the history of Joseph, in the writings of Jeremiah, and in the life of our blessed Lord. They will find also that these minute incidents were thus providentially ordered, for the accomplishment of the prophetic word. Need I say, my beloved brethren, that this is an unspeakable benefit—next to the free forgiveness of our sins

* Luke xii.

through the merits of our blessed Saviour, and the renewing and sanctifying our nature by the gift of the Holy Ghost—there is no truth that tends so much to calm the mind, to sooth the spirits, to remove anxiety as to the future, to render the soul patient in tribulation, and resigned to the divine will in the most distressing bereavements, as a firm belief in God's providence. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" was our blessed Saviour's reply to Peter when that disciple drew his sword to defend his divine Master; "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away," were the submissive words which the patriarch Job uttered when informed of his many and grievous afflictions.

I notice but one more reason to shew the importance of an accurate knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures; that its tendency is to promote that holy and happy frame of mind, which the great apostle so strongly enforces in his Epistle to the Colossians. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth: for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."* For the diligent student, tracing

* Colossians iii. 1—3.

the continually widening stream of prophecy, as it flows through the various dispensations of the patriarchal, the Jewish, the Gentile, and that glorious economy which is yet to come, beholds, from first to last, one great design.

In the three first chapters of the Bible he sees the germ of that plan, which, in the three last, becomes as a widely spreading tree, under which the whole family of God may lodge. Or rather, in the prophetic promise to our first parents, he beholds the first link of the chain of God's abundant grace and mercy let down to Paradise, to raise the hopes of fallen man; whilst the closing portion of the prophetic roll exhibited to St. John, so confirms, strengthens, and establishes this blessed hope, that all the intermediate dealings of God resemble, if it be allowable to make the comparison, the work of some skilful artist, who adds another and another wheel to his machine, but who, having the whole model in his eye, adapts each particular part to the furtherance of his first design. He considers himself therefore but "as a stranger and a sojourner upon earth;" "he is looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He views time as important principally as connected with eternity. He desires to be one with Christ; to be so united to him by a living faith, that "he may stand in

his lot at the end of the days,"* and finally with all his faithful servants have "an entrance ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Such are some of the benefits—for I do not wish to detain you by further enlarging—connected with an accurate knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures. It strengthens and establishes the belief in the sacred volume as the inspired word of God. It is a key to a right understanding of its contents. It is among the best means of attaining just and glorious views of the character of God ; of the person and work of our blessed Saviour ; and of those principles and that practice which tend to our present and everlasting happiness. It clearly reveals those truths which are so important in ordinary life, the moral government and the overruling providence of God. And, finally, it tends to place the soul in its most happy frame, having "the conversation in heaven ;" "setting the affections on things above, not on things on the earth, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

If we ponder over these advantages, "the sure word of prophecy" may well be called "a light

* Daniel xii. 13.

in a dark place.” Not such a light as the self-confident trust in, who “kindle a fire and compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling.” But such a light as by the blessing of God will lead the possessor in safety in the darkest night of tribulation ; yea even carry him through the valley of the shadow of death, without fear of evil ; and bring him to that blessed abode where no such light is required, “for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Such then being the importance of an accurate knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures, permit me, in conclusion, to offer a few suggestions as to the spirit in which they should be read.

First, then, I would mention, **IN THE SPIRIT OF FAITH** ; or with a simple, child-like belief of the truth of the word ; not allowing the mind to hesitate on account of apparent difficulties, but, like the Father of the faithful, “believing that what God has promised, that he is able to perform.”

Secondly. **IN THE SPIRIT OF HUMBLE, EARNEST PRAYER FOR DIVINE TEACHING.** It should silence those who are disposed to censure such studies, and at the same time act as a warning against hasty interpretations, that the most holy of God’s servants, those who are specially noted for their devotional spirit, diligently searched the

prophetic books, and united their studies with earnest prayer to God.

It was after a season of prayer with his three companions that Nebuchadnezzar's vision was revealed to Daniel. It was also after a season of devotional retirement, that the closing chapters of his prophetic book were made known to him. Such a devotional spirit is particularly requisite, since love is the soil in which divine knowledge most thrives; for it is in a loving heart that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, the true interpreter of prophecy, delights to dwell.

Thirdly. I would notice A SPIRIT OF PATIENT DILIGENCE—not expecting to attain “the mind of the Spirit” at a single glance, but following the course of those holy men “who inquired and searched diligently, searching when or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that shall follow.” Weighing the context; observing the time and the occasion of the prophecy; comparing spiritual things with spiritual; being encouraged by the remembrance of that blessed word, “then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as

the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”*

Fourthly. WITH A SPIRIT OF MODERATION: not laying such a stress upon the prophetic Scriptures, as to disregard other parts of the sacred volume. Still less so to be occupied with prophecy, as to neglect the duties of your station. Ever remembering that it is not the most accurate acquaintance with the revealed plan of God, that will be our safety in a trying hour—it is union with Christ, “being found in him,” and through his merits, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

The word of prophecy is only like the word of warning which was given to Noah, who, “moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” It was not his previous knowledge of the coming deluge which preserved him, it was his being actually in the ark. And thus it must be with every one in these fearful days. The Lord Jesus Christ must be our ark; or, if you prefer the name, “the rock of our salvation.” Here we must seek for shelter. Never forget those striking words of St. Paul, “knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.” “Though I speak with the

* Hosea vi. 3.

tongues of men and of angels . . . and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.”*

Further, With A SPIRIT OF FORBEARANCE AND BROTHERLY LOVE : bearing in mind that all are not equally apt to learn, nor does God give to every one the same measure of knowledge ; therefore no person should dogmatize, or treat with disrespect those who may not see exactly with his eyes. Sanctified knowledge is humble knowledge. They whom the Lord condescends to teach very soon discover how little they know, and how much they have to learn. It has been, alas ! the harsh, and bitter, and consequential spirit in which some of the most crude and far-fetched interpretations of prophecy have been given, and the strife and angry contention with which, in some instances, the sacred subject has been discussed, which has set others against this study. And therefore let us, my beloved friends, follow His example who said, “ Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.”

Finally, Let this study be pursued IN THE SPIRIT

* 1 Corinthians xiii. 1, 2.

OF GRATEFUL PRAISE AND ADORING ADMIRATION. It was thus that the prophet Micah closed his book: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

It was thus also that Saint Paul concluded that well known chapter in which he sums up the divine purpose towards both Jews and Gentiles. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." And well they might express themselves with such holy rapture. For without referring to the marvellous exercise of forbearance, longsuffering, and unexhausted patience which have marked the progress of the divine procedure through every step of human existence, the Lord still carrying on his gracious purpose, notwithstanding the multiplied offences and

grievous transgressions even of his own people, without referring to the admiration which the display of these attributes must produce; who can comprehend the extent of goodness and mercy, “the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” the height and depth, and length and breadth, of the love” which must dwell in the mind of that great and glorious God who first conceived, and then set himself to accomplish, and with unchanging faithfulness has still continued to prosecute, so blessed a purpose: so to entwine together the infinite variety of events which his overruling providence has directed or permitted, that the whole transactions performed on this lower earth shall at length terminate in the everlasting felicity of unnumbered myriads of “miserable sinners,”—a felicity from which not one person whose ears “the joyful sound” has reached was excluded, but the vilest wretch who desired to forsake his sin and lay hold of the Lord Jesus was met with this encouraging promise, “Whosoever will, let him come,” “and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.”

Oh, my beloved friends, when the mind is set free from the trammels of this lower world, and is permitted to roam at large in this delightful region—the region in which the purposes of God shall be fully accomplished—his dispersed and outcast

people fully restored to his favour, the believing Gentiles sharing in their abundant prosperity, the angelic hosts receiving new delight from this display of glory, and all created nature resounding with hallelujahs to God and to the Lamb ;— when the soul meditates upon this grand consummation, it seems astonished that every heart is not confounded with shame and self-reproach for its coldness and indifference to so great a work ; that every tongue is not filled with earnest prayer to God “ shortly to accomplish the number of his elect and to hasten his kingdom ;” and that every power of body, soul, and spirit is not stretched to the uttermost to bring on the blessed day.

But I will not pursue the subject further, delightful as it would be to expatiate in this paradise of God. My prayer is, that the Lord may bless that which has been spoken ; that enabling you to see the inestimable value of that sure word of prophecy which he has given as a light in a dark place, you may seek to acquire an accurate knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures ; and for this purpose, pursue their study in the spirit here recommended, and finally attain that glorious inheritance which is reserved in heaven for those “ who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

R U L E S

TO BE OBSERVED IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE

PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES.

LECTURE II.

RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES.

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2 PETER i. 21.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

THE present lecture has been announced under the title of the Rules to be observed in the Interpretation of the Prophetic Scriptures ; and from the very general nature (if that alone were considered) of the terms so employed, it might perhaps be expected to contain a dissertation upon the interpretation of prophecy in its widest extent ; and to comprehend, among other particulars, an exposition of the principles which ought to guide us, in endeavouring to determine the meaning of the various symbolical representations which occur in the prophetic imagery of the Old, and especially of the New Testament.

But from every attempt of this kind we are deterred, on the present occasion, not only by the wide extent and extreme difficulty which obviously belong to an investigation of such a nature ; but also from the happy necessity of bearing in mind the special design of the course of Lectures of which the present is intended to constitute one of the series, namely, to exhibit a practical view of the past, present, and future purposes of God towards the Jews ; in pursuance of which design, it would appear to commend itself as our safest course, to confine our remarks for the most part, if not exclusively, to that department of prophecy—itself sufficiently extensive—in which the language of symbols is not used ; and to endeavour, as far as we may be enabled, to state the manner in which these plainer prophetic declarations ought to be understood or interpreted by us, if we would hope to ascertain what it was in the mind of the Spirit to disclose, respecting the prospects of that people whom Jehovah chose to himself to be his inheritance ; and with whom he has established a covenant which shall endure to all generations.

It might perhaps appear to some minds, that a discussion of this kind is not altogether suited to form the subject of an address from the pulpit ; that it must, from its very nature, belong rather to the school of Theology or scientific Divinity,

than to the Church, which we may be permitted to denominate the seminary of devotional, experimental, and practical religion ; that it must be less conversant, or less immediately conversant, than many other subjects, with those great truths and precepts, upon the cordial reception of which depends the state of man as a sinner pardoned and accepted of God, and with those holy affections and dispositions of mind in which all true piety properly consists :—and these remarks, I conceive, are by no means without their force. But still it ought to be remembered, that all spiritual profit must ever depend on a right understanding of God's Holy Word ; of which sacred volume prophecy forms a very considerable part :—that if we form a wrong apprehension of any portion of the Divine records, we lose the benefit of those particular lessons which that portion was designed to teach ; and that if, in consequence of conducting our scriptural inquiries upon wrong principles, or by a wrong method, we deduce from them conclusions different from those to which any particular passage, when understood rightly, would really lead, we must in every such case, even though our conclusions should contain nothing positively erroneous in themselves, be in reality losers by them ; unless it could be maintained that our own imaginary sense of the passage in question is likely to prove equally profit-

able, in a practical point of view, with that which the Holy Spirit intended to convey. And on this account, I am by no means certain that it would not tend much to the spiritual advantage of our people, if topics of this kind were more frequently brought forward and treated of, in our public ministry, than is usually the practice amongst us.

Perhaps the simplest and most easily intelligible mode 'in which I can handle' the subject with which I have been intrusted, and by which I may hope that it will be rendered interesting to a popular audience, will be to propose in the form of questions, two or three in number, those inquiries, which, it is not unnatural to suppose, may suggest themselves to a well regulated and conscientious mind, on opening and searching the volume of Sacred Scripture, with a view to obtain information on the subject of the present Course of Lectures,—that is, concerning the expectations and prospects of the Jewish nation and people.

Whether *any* statements, *apparently* favoring or giving countenance to expectations or prospects of a blessed and glorious kind, present themselves to the reader of the Sacred Volume, can be no question at all. This fact is too obvious to admit of a moment's doubt or dispute. The only legitimate inquiry must relate to the mode in which the statements in question require to be understood, and we may therefore properly ask,

I. Are these prophecies to be taken by us as they verbally stand, and to be understood to relate really and properly to the descendants of Abraham ; or are we to consider them as unfolding the designs of Almighty God towards the Christian Church ? This, it will be immediately perceived, is equivalent to the inquiry whether the prophetic Scriptures are to be taken in their literal and grammatical sense ; or whether they are to be understood in some figurative or spiritual signification.

And this inquiry may then be followed by another, namely—

II. Are the prophetic statements or declarations of Sacred Scripture to be taken in one sense only ; or may they be understood to bear more than one signification ? and in what way will the determination of the former question be modified or affected by the present ? This relates to what is termed the question concerning the double sense of prophecy.—And, further,—

III. Supposing that these prophetic Scriptures do really relate to the fortunes of the Jewish people ; then, since they were all delivered in ages long since past, may they not have already reached their accomplishment : or are there any decisive

marks of distinction, by which we may clearly discern, and ascertain, the line of demarcation between those prophecies which have, and those which have not, received their fulfilment; and which latter must alone constitute the basis of the present and future prospects of that remarkable people?

Let us then address ourselves to these questions in their order: and—

I. Are these prophecies to be taken by us as they verbally stand, and to be understood to relate really and properly to the descendants of Abraham; or are we to consider them as unfolding the designs of Almighty God towards the Christian Church?—which question, as has been already observed, resolves itself into the inquiry whether the prophetic Scriptures are to be taken in their literal and grammatical sense, or whether they are to be understood in some figurative or spiritual signification.

Now with respect to all compositions of a didactic nature, it is generally admitted that our investigation of their true meaning, or the proper interpretation of them, should be guided by the following rules—

1. Considering that it must have been the design of the author really to instruct his readers, the words which he has employed in his discourse

must be understood according *to the sense usually attached to them, by persons who spoke the language in which it is composed.*

2. Considering, next, that, for the same reason, the author would employ his various terms of expression, in such senses as he was aware the parties to whom he addressed himself would attach to them, we may therefore conclude that the words of an author are to be understood *in the sense affixed to them by the persons for whose benefit they were immediately written.* And—

3. Considering that the circumstances and situation of an author, may oftentimes afford a clue to his meaning, we are therefore to understand the terms which he employs, in a manner not inconsistent with his known character and opinions, as also the known circumstances of the subject on which he wrote. Such are considered to be the proper rules, by the application of which we may expect to arrive at the true meaning of an author: and the general tenor of them obviously is, that in all compositions, except where specific and adequate reasons, connected with either the author or persons for whom he wrote, or implied in the very nature of the composition itself, can be assigned to the contrary, the literal and grammatical sense is that which must be uniformly and rigidly adhered to. And that such is the true principle

to be employed in the interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures, except where they are obviously symbolical, will, I think, fully appear hereafter.

When, however, we speak of taking the words of the prophetic Scriptures—or indeed of any other writings whatever—in their literal and grammatical sense, as opposed to a figurative system of interpretation, it is by no means to be understood that every *single term* is to be literally interpreted : on the contrary, many single terms will be found, even in the plainest and most literal discourse, which are applied *metaphorically* to the subject which they represent. Thus, for instance, the prophecy which occurs in Isaiah xi. 1, 2, and which is expressed in the following words: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots ; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,” &c., obviously relates to the Messiah — the Lord Jesus Christ : nor is it to be considered as in any sense a less literal prophecy because the Messiah himself is described by the metaphorical phrase of “a Rod coming forth from the stem of Jesse,” or “a Branch growing out of his roots.” And I may here add, that in my opinion, for want of attention to the metaphorical character of particular terms, pro-

phesy has often been made to speak a language far different from that which is its real meaning or interpretation.

But the thing against which we contend is, when not *single terms*, but *whole sentences or discourses*, are made to signify things different from those which they obviously express ; when it is admitted that the *words* of the prophecy contain or express one series of ideas, but contended at the same time, that the real meaning of the prophecy itself is something different. In a word, when I contend that prophecy ought not to be understood or interpreted figuratively, the particular description of figure to which I refer, is that which it is usual to denominate by the term ALLEGORY.

The nature of allegory is well known. It consists of a fictitious story which is employed to convey to the mind a certain lesson, chiefly of a moral nature ; which lesson is altogether a different thing from the statement conveyed in the words themselves, but is, notwithstanding, most readily apprehended, in virtue of the close parallel—which the mind at once perceives—between the thing expressed and that intended. And if an instance were wanting for the purpose of illustrating this remark, I would refer, as amply sufficient for the purpose, to that most beautiful and instructive of all allegories, our Lord's parable, the Sower.

The thing, then, against which we contend, will now, I trust, be well understood. It is the practice of regarding the volume of prophecy, even when its language is plain, in the light of an allegory in which the thing declared is one, and the thing intended is another ; and by which the sense in which it is to be *fulfilled*, is totally different from that in which it is *expressed*. As if, for instance, when we read those prophecies—to some of which I shall have occasion to refer presently—which, according to the letter, predict a state of great *temporal* prosperity to the *people of Israel*, we should understand them as having no real design of this kind, but as relating exclusively to the *spiritual* prosperity of the *church of Christ* gathered from among the Gentiles.

It needs, however, scarcely to be observed, that it has of late years been a very general practice thus to allegorize—or, as it is sometimes called, to spiritualize—the book of prophecy ; to regard and interpret the prophetic Scriptures, or at least those parts of them which speak the language of promise or of benediction, as if designed exclusively for the Christian church as such ; and any interest which the Jewish people, as a nation, might be supposed to have in them, has been overlooked and lost sight of, if not even denied and derided altogether. The idea, true in itself, that we live

under the Christian dispensation—a dispensation not of shadows but of realities—and that the privileges of that dispensation are not confined, like those of the preceding, to the Jews, but are extended to the Gentiles of every tribe and nation, unto whom the word of salvation has reached, has so taken hold of the minds of many, and so filled up the field of their vision with regard to subjects of this nature, that no room, if I may so speak, has been left for the Jewish people to occupy. Israel has been supposed to be nothing else than a metaphorical expression intended to signify the Church, or the people in covenant with God. The Land of Promise too has been supposed to signify the Kingdom of Heaven, the place where the people of God shall receive their eternal inheritance, and the like.

Some have supposed that the authority of Scripture itself might be pleaded in favour of this mode of proceeding; they have imagined that when it is declared that “unto the prophets it was revealed,” or revelation was made,—“that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now declared unto you by them which have preached the gospel unto you;”* the thing intended by such declaration was no other than to assure us, who live under

* 1 Peter i. 12.

the present dispensation, that every promise of the Old Testament is to be understood in a spiritual sense only ; and that to suppose any special reference to be had to the Jews in the development of God's purposes of mercy, or any temporal favours, or national glories or privileges, to be designed for the children of the stock of Abraham, is utterly at variance with the characters of spirituality and universality, which belong to the church of Christ.

Similar conclusions have also been drawn from various passages in the writings of St. Paul ; as, for instance, where it is said, " He is not a Jew which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom. ii. 28, 29.) " They are not all Israel which are of Israel : neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children : but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God : but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." (Rom. ix. 6—8.) And especially, " As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And

if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. iii. 27—29.) Of which it may be sufficient to observe, that had they been adduced for the purpose of shewing that equal spiritual mercies and privileges are secured under the Gospel to believers of every nation, whether Jew or Gentile; and that no spiritual privilege belongs to the Jew, simply in virtue of his descent from Abraham, unless he be also a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, they would supply suitable and indisputable evidence in favour of the truth of those propositions; but that they are altogether irrelevant and inapplicable, and therefore inadequate, to the very different purpose of proving that the prophecies which speak of Judah and Israel, and describe them as in a state of great temporal and spiritual prosperity, have no special reference to the fortunes and expectations of that remarkable people.

But to this figurative or (as it is sometimes called) spiritual mode of interpretation of the prophetic scriptures, there do, I conceive, exist several most formidable, and indeed insuperable objections, grounded upon the principles already laid down, by which all interpretation must be governed.

And the first of these objections is drawn from what appears to me to be *the true scope or mean-*

ing of the passage of this Epistle of St. Peter, of which the text is the concluding part.

Commencing from verse 16, we read thus:—
“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Now it is obvious that St. Peter here alludes to one of the most remarkable events in the history of our Lord, of which he, in common with two other favoured disciples James and John, had enjoyed the singular privilege of being an eye-witness:—that of his transfiguration.

The history of this transaction is thus recorded by the Evangelist, Matthew xvii. 1—5.

“And Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and

one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

This glorious form, in which the Lord Jesus was thus presented to the view of his favoured disciples, accompanied as he was by the presence of his servants Moses and Elias, who also appeared in glory; was evidently believed by the Apostle to have been an exhibition of that yet future glorious appearance in which he shall one day be manifested in the sight of all his people, when he shall "come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him."

Now this glorious coming of Christ, which is still the "blessed hope" of his church, had been the subject of prophecy under the Old Testament: in proof of which, we may just refer to Zechariah xiv. 5, where it is said, "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." But it had also been directly prophesied of by our Lord himself; as we read in Matthew xxv. 31: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." And again in Matthew xxvi. 64: "Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on

the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

Now it is, I think, too evident to require further explanation, that these and similar prophecies would be both more strongly and vividly impressed, and that the expectations which they were intended to raise would receive a degree of confirmation, in the minds of those disciples who had been favoured with this ocular manifestation of the glory of the Saviour, such as nothing else could have afforded ; and St. Peter therefore goes on, in allusion to this singular event, to say in verse 19 of the chapter before us, “ We have also a more sure word of prophecy ;”—or rather, and more properly, ‘ We have also *more sure the word of prophecy* :’ we have the word of prophecy illustrated, *confirmed*, rendered *more certain* ;—“ whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light (or lamp) that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.”

Now, brethren, the point to which I wish to draw your attention here is, that it is obvious that St. Peter, when he thus states that the prophecies concerning Christ’s appearing in glory were confirmed, or rendered more sure by his glorious appearance on the mount of transfiguration, must have understood those prophecies in their literal sense. Having himself seen Christ in his glory,

and Moses and Elias also in glory, he was the more strongly convinced that both the Saviour himself, and his saints also, would again appear in glory, as had been foretold concerning him.

It may be worth while to observe, that St. Peter, when he had thus encouraged the minds of believers to look forward to the fulfilment of the prophetic writings in the literal acceptation, bespeaks also for those prophetic scriptures the most profound and solemn attention, on the ground of the authority and of the origin from whence they proceed. "Knowing this first:" considering first or chiefly this great feature of the entire volume of prophecy; "that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation"—that is, no prophecy of Scripture is to be so regarded or so understood as if it were a mere private or human affair; as if it originated in man; as if it spoke the mere private or otherwise unauthorised judgment or opinion of the prophet himself, by whose pen it was written; "For prophecy came not in old time (or at any time) by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The next or second objection, which I would advance against any system of figurative interpretation of the book of prophecy, is the *indefiniteness and uncertainty, the want of specific meaning, and*

even unintelligibleness, which must, upon any such system, attach to a large portion of the prophetic writings themselves.

Upon no system of figurative interpretation, is the reader of the book of prophecy enabled to proceed intelligibly, *in detail*, through the entire course of a continued prophetical discourse. The terms, to which any distinct notions of signification, and those extremely wide and general, are attached, being few ; we must utterly fail of obtaining any clear and consistent idea, respecting the meaning of *all the several parts* of such a prophecy.

For example : Suppose we understand Israel to signify the Christian Church ; and, by some stretch of imagination, allow further that Judah and Ephraim may imply the sects into which it is unhappily divided ; still what meaning, let me ask, could be attached to the whole prophecy contained in Isaiah xi. 10—16 ? “ In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people ; to it shall the Gentiles seek : and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass . . . that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign

for the nations and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry-shod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt."

Allowing every word of this remarkable prophecy to retain its proper and natural meaning, its import is indeed perfectly clear and intelligible, and holds out a glorious hope, as we shall hereafter have occasion more particularly to observe, of spiritual and temporal prosperity to the people of Israel in ages yet to come. But taken in any allegorical sense, it is difficult to imagine any distinct signification which can be assigned to the numerous terms which it contains—Assyria, Egypt,

&c., the tongue of the Egyptian sea, the river with its seven streams, &c.; and, as a whole, it is deprived of meaning altogether.

But what is even worse than this indistinctness of meaning, there would, as it appears to me, result, in many instances, from such a system of interpretation, conclusions in the most glaring degree absurd and inconsistent with the truth. For example, if the children of Israel mean the Christian Church; and their own land, the land of promise, signify the heavenly state or place of eternal blessedness; then what must be the meaning of a prophecy such as that contained in Ezekiel xxxvi. 24—28: “I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God?”

Taken, I again repeat, with reference to the terms in their simple and proper sense, this pro-

phesy is most clear and easy to be understood ; and holds out to the people of Israel a most blessed hope of restoration to their own land, of conversion to the faith of Christ, and of prosperity in the enjoyment of the favour of the Most High. But distorted and mutilated by figurative interpretation, its meaning, if indeed it can be said to have any meaning at all, could be nothing else than that God promises to take his people to heaven, and then to convert them to himself afterwards.

Another objection against a system of figurative interpretation is that *it is destitute of all authority in the example of our Lord and his Apostles.*

It is almost needless to observe that many prophecies relating to himself and to his Divine mission, are cited in various parts of the New Testament by our Lord and also by his Apostles, and are declared to have received their fulfilment in him. And it is equally clear that the citations are made, and that their fulfilments agree with them in their literal and grammatical sense.

In proof of this I might instance the prophecy contained in Micah v. 2 : “ But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel ; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting ;”

and refer to the citation of it in St. Matthew ii. 6; and then ask whether that prophecy was not understood by the Scribes, and certainly by St. Matthew himself, in its literal sense; and whether it was not literally fulfilled in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ?

I might instance also the prophecy contained in Isaiah lxi. 1, where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord;" and then refer to Luke iv. 21, where it is declared by our Lord himself in the synagogue at Nazareth, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears;" and thus ask whether this prophecy did not literally describe the office of Christ, and whether it did not receive a literal fulfilment in him?

Or I might refer to Isaiah liii. 7, 8: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living." And on referring to Acts viii. 32, 33, I might ask again whether this prophecy was not literally

understood both by Philip and the Eunuch, and whether it was not also literally fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ ?

In all these cases it is too obvious to require any further proof or illustration, that the prophecies in question are understood and fulfilled in the same sense which these terms literally convey; and why then should a different principle of interpretation be adopted in other cases, without authority, or any intimation of a necessity for so doing ?

It may be well, perhaps, to observe, in this place, that the Scriptures of the Prophets were designed, among other purposes of extreme importance, to supply a principal share in the body of evidence, by which was to be established the claim of Jesus of Nazareth to be received as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. “ Search the Scriptures,” said our Lord himself to the Jews, “ for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.”

And it is at the same time to be borne in mind, that the recognition and acknowledgment of Christ in this character, was not intended to be, to the men of that or any succeeding generation, a matter of indifference or of choice, but of the deepest responsibility and most peremptory obligation ; a matter in which should be involved the

most important of all possible consequences, the dearest interests of men, even those of eternity.

Now, such a purpose as this, it is obvious that the prophetic Scriptures would not have been calculated to serve ; nor would God, who delighteth in mercy, have employed them for it, under such circumstances of awful responsibility, if the sense in which they were to be understood had been otherwise than definite and easy of comprehension ; if the correspondence between the meaning of the terms employed in the prophetic writings, and the facts which constituted their fulfilment, had been one of resemblance only, which to some minds might be scarcely apparent, and respecting the degree of which room might be left for great variety of opinion ; instead of that absolute identity which no one could refuse to acknowledge without justly incurring the charge of wilful blindness ; or, in other words, if the prophecies had not been intended to be understood in their literal and grammatical sense.

I might go on to add, as another reason in favour of the grammatical rather than the figurative system of the interpretation of prophecy, *that such interpretation was the prevailing practice of the writers of the earliest and purest ages of the Christian Church.* Of this it would be no difficult task to produce many striking and appropriate ex-

amples ; as in like manner it would be easy to produce evidence sufficient to shew, that the adoption of a figurative system of interpretation has been one of the characteristic practices of the Church of Rome.

But I forbear to enlarge further upon this topic, and would for a moment (although, as has been already observed, it does not fall within the main object of this discourse) refer to that class of prophetic writings to which, from the nature of the case, the preceding observations will not apply ; those which are avowedly allegorical, and employ professedly the language of symbols. Of this nature, for instance, is the vision of the four beasts coming up in succession out of the sea, contained in the seventh chapter of the Book of Daniel : also that of the ram and he-goat, in the eighth chapter of the same Book ; and particularly the whole series of prophetic imagery contained in the closing Book of the New Testament.

Now with respect to prophecies of this class, it is obvious that the chief thing to be aimed at, in the endeavour to comprehend their true import, must be to obtain a true knowledge of the meaning of the symbols themselves ; and if this were once accomplished, and the interpretations *substituted* for the symbols, these prophecies would then lose their symbolical character, and be reduced to a

form in which, like others, they would be required to be understood in their literal and grammatical sense.

And happily this task, though certainly not easy, or even perhaps capable of complete execution, is by no means to be regarded as hopeless, and in every degree impracticable. To suppose it such, indeed, would be nothing less in effect, than to deny the claim of symbolical prophecy to be regarded as a part of divine *revelation*; and to arraign that heavenly wisdom, which has caused it to occupy a place, as an integral portion of that word, which he has given to be a light to our feet and a lamp to our path. In fact, as in other cases of Scriptural allegory, so in *some* of these prophetic allegories, the explanation of the symbols, and of the meaning of the entire figurative narration, is supplied by the pen of inspiration itself; and we have examples of this inspired interpretation, in both the instances to which reference has already been made in the Book of Daniel, where we are expressly informed, that “these great beasts, which are four, are four kings (or monarchies) which shall arise out of the earth,” (Dan. vii. 17); and also that “The ram which the prophet had seen in a vision, having two horns, were the kings of Medea and Persia: and the rough goat, the king of Grecia,” (Dan. viii. 20, 21).

These interpretations seem to have been designed, by the goodness of God, to furnish the key to the symbolical language of other prophecies, of which we are not favoured with similar literal expositions, but the general sense of which is thus made apparent; since it must be held as a maxim of prophetic interpretation, that the meaning of the symbols employed is not unsettled and changeable, but fixed and stationary; and that whatever be the signification of a certain description of image in one instance, the same must be held to be its meaning in every other. By a proper attention to this maxim, I am inclined to think that much of the confusion which has been introduced into interpretations of symbolical prophecy, might have been avoided.

II. I proceed now to the notice of our second proposed question, namely, Are the prophetic statements, or declarations of Sacred Scripture, to be taken in one sense only; or may they be understood to bear more than one signification? and in what way will the determination of the former question be modified or affected by the present?

This, it has been already observed, is the question which relates to what is called the “double sense of prophecy,” and my remarks upon it will be as brief as possible.

I observe, then, that it has pleased God in his unbounded wisdom, for the purpose of making the great truths of religion more clearly intelligible, and of impressing them the more strongly upon the thoughts and consciences of men, to employ certain historical facts, as well as various appointed ordinances, by way of *illustration*; and thus to establish, between the illustrative events or transactions and the principal facts or truths which they are designed to explain, a relation which we are accustomed to denominate that of Type and Antitype. A single example may be sufficient to confirm, if confirmation be wanting, the truth of this remark.

I observe, then, that the respective conditions of the wife and the concubine of Abraham, together with the circumstances relating to the offspring of each, are used to typify or illustrate the distinguishing features of the old and new covenants.

The history itself, as you well know, is contained in the Book of Genesis; and its typical import is thus declared by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, iv. 21—31: "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh: but he of the free woman was by promise.

Which things are an allegory," (or more properly, which things are *allegorized*): "for there are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free."

Now let it be supposed that a certain *typical* event, instead of being *related*, in the Scriptures, *as matter of history*, should be *set forth as matter of prophecy*. That is, suppose it to have been the declared purpose of God to bring about *some particular event*, which event itself was intended to serve as a type or illustration *of some other event* still more remote, still farther removed from the date of the prophetic

intimation ; then it will be evident that, in such a case, the prophecy which contains the prediction of the former or typical event, may in no very improper sense be declared also to be prophetic of the latter or antitypical event also ; and that while the former of the two events will justly claim to be considered as the thing *primarily* intended by the terms of the prophecy and the subject of its literal interpretation, the latter or antitypical event may likewise, without impropriety, be considered as a thing also *additionally* intended by the same prophecy, which will, in this respect, be understood in a secondary or figurative signification.

To determine what the prophecies are which admit of this double interpretation, it will readily be admitted, is no easy task. That such instances do exist, however, we have the clearest proof in the word of God itself ; and I shall refer, as an example, to one, the subject of which is closely connected with the main design of the present discourse, considered as one of the series to which it belongs. This you will find in Genesis xvii. 7, 8, where God is pleased thus to promise and foretel the mercy which it was his gracious purpose to bestow upon Abraham and his posterity : “ I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee

and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession ; and I will be their God.”

Now this is a prophecy requiring, I need scarcely say, to be in the first instance literally understood ; and which has been already, in great part, literally fulfilled. God did, in due time, bring the children of Abraham into the actual possession of that land of Canaan which he promised to Abraham, and gave to each family its own particular inheritance. But this prophecy had *also* another and *secondary* signification, in which we ourselves are most deeply interested ; for we learn from St. Paul, that under the terms “the seed of Abraham,” was especially intended the Lord Jesus Christ ; including in him the whole number of his mystical body, who are united to him by faith ; or, in other words, that Abraham’s natural posterity was a *type* of his spiritual posterity ; and moreover that the land of Canaan was intended to be regarded *as a type* of the eternal abode of the people of God, when they shall receive their everlasting inheritance, which is secured to them in virtue of this very covenant made with Abraham. Observe the language of the Apostle, in writing to the Galatians, iii. 7 : “ Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” And again, ver. 16 ; “ Now to Abra-

ham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” And further, ver. 29: “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs *according to the promise.*”

So long as we assign the character of bearing a double sense to those prophecies, of which we are furnished with the double interpretation in the Scriptures themselves, we are obviously on secure ground; and it may well be doubted whether it is even allowable to speak *with confidence*, in assigning this character to prophecies of which we do not possess such *authoritative* interpretation. There are some prophecies, however, which seem *almost* to forbid us to entertain doubt as to their two-fold signification; and if it be permitted me to select one as an instance, which I must regard as superior to all reasonable exception, it would be that which is found in 2 Samuel vii. 12—16; where God thus speaks by his prophet to his servant David: “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the

children of men ; but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee : thy throne shall be established for ever.”

Now here I would observe, that while it appears impossible to believe otherwise than that this prophecy relates primarily to Solomon, and to the temple which was to be built for the service of the Lord Jehovah in his days, and to the continuance of the kingdom of Israel in his line ; yet it appears also equally impossible to believe otherwise than that “a greater than Solomon is here ;” that we have here a prophecy of that Christ whom God would raise up to David to sit on his throne ; of that spiritual Temple consisting of living stones, which he should build, and of which he should be the chief corner-stone ; and of that universal dominion which he should hold over all things, even till time shall be no more.

One difficulty, indeed, there appears to be in the way of this secondary interpretation of this prophecy, which consists in the application to the Lord Jesus Christ of the terms “*If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him,*” &c. But this difficulty is, I think, more apparent than real. The original term, thus translated, is not in an active but a *passive* form ; and would, according to the

opinion of many competent judges, have been more justly represented by the rendering—"In his *suffering* for iniquity." And it is almost needless to observe, that in this form it not only presents no ground of objection or difficulty, but is singularly *appropriate* to him, upon whom was inflicted the chastisement of our offences, and by whose stripes we are healed.

The answer, therefore, to the question with which we are now concerned, appears to be as follows:—As among *the events related* in the *historical* parts of the Holy Scripture, there were *some*, distinguished from the general number, which were designed by Almighty God to be types of good things to come ; and the account or record of which admitted of an allegorical interpretation, relating to the things which were typified by them : so among the *events foretold* in the *prophetical* parts of the same Holy Scripture, there are some, in like manner, equally distinguished from the general mass, which have a similar emblematical reference to other and further truths or events of which they also afford apt and suitable illustration. But as the former, that is, the historical events in question, were not less real occurrences, or the account of them in any degree the less a real history, because they were types : so neither do these latter or prophetical events lose, for that reason, their real

or literal character. These prophecies, therefore, for their primary signification, require to be taken in their grammatical sense. And as the secondary sense of such prophecies arises solely out of their peculiar or typical character, no countenance is afforded by the spiritual or figurative interpretation which belongs to these prophecies in particular, to any system of figurative interpretation of prophecy in general. Our principle of grammatical interpretation is, therefore, altogether unaffected by the double sense of prophecy.

But before we proceed to the third and last inquiry which we proposed to discuss, it may be desirable to give some reply to an objection which we may suppose to be made on the part of those who entertain a jealousy respecting the results which must follow from such strict adherence to the grammatical interpretation of prophecy. "Are we not expressly told," we may imagine the objector to ask, "that whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope?" And, if you maintain that prophecy is to be interpreted after a system so strictly grammatical; and, as a matter of necessary consequence, to be understood as conveying reproofs, exhortations, promises, and consolations to the Jewish people in particular; Do you not hereby

deprive *us* of the Gentile church of that comfort of the Scripture, and therefore of that hope, which God has been pleased graciously to design that we should possess and enjoy?

The answer to this is, that it is by no means necessary, for the purpose of securing to the Christian Church the whole benefit which the instruction and comfort of the Scriptures were designed to convey, to suppose that the declarations of the *prophecies* must of necessity apply to the Gentile Church, as a matter of direct interpretation. It is amply sufficient that the application be indirect, and *in the way of example*, provided it be certain and unquestionable. And since we are assured, on the highest authority, that God is “not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, seeing it is one God who justifieth the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith;” it appears to follow, as an indubitable inference, that whatever spiritual mercies He engages to bestow upon the Jews, may be calculated upon as secure to the Gentiles also.

Hence, then, I apprehend we may safely conclude that the lessons of spiritual instruction and comfort, derived to the Gentile Church from the prophetic Scriptures, are not diminished, but immeasurably enhanced, by the strict application of them to the Jews. Because, upon this latter

system of grammatical interpretation, the various reproofs and promises, the appeals to covenant engagements, and declarations of God's unchangeable adherence to his own sovereign purposes of mercy towards his chosen people, will have a *point* and a *force*, a specific meaning and distinct significance, which would be utterly lost in the indefinite, and vague, and pointless generalities which must necessarily attend the system of figurative interpretation.

But if the foregoing remarks be thought to possess in themselves anything of either force or propriety, it will immediately follow, and be considered an established point, in the minds of all who have read their Bibles with attention, that there are held out, in the volume of Sacred Scripture, expectations of the most exalted temporal and spiritual prosperity to the descendants of Abraham ; and the only or chief question with which we are further concerned is :—

III. Since these prophecies were all delivered in ages long since past, May they not have already received their accomplishment ? or are there any decisive marks of distinction, by which we may clearly discern, and ascertain the line of demarcation, between those which have and those which have not been fulfilled ? which latter alone can consti-

tute the basis of the present and future prospects of the Jewish people.

Now, with respect to this most important part of our subject, I observe that some of the prophecies in question are contained in the **NEW TESTAMENT**; and these, it is obvious, can present no difficulty with regard to the particulars now under consideration.

Since the days of the apostles of our Lord, the Jewish people have not known prosperity. Speedily after the commencement of the Christian dispensation, the judgments of God were poured out, in floods of righteous indignation, upon that devoted people. The Temple and City of Jerusalem were destroyed; and from that time to the present, "Jerusalem has been trodden under-foot of the Gentiles." The people too have been scattered abroad throughout the earth, and have become a "proverb and a by-word among all nations whither the Lord hath led them," until this day.

Any prophecy relating to the Jewish people, found in the New Testament, in which they are described as in a state of happiness and prosperity, must clearly be as yet unfulfilled, and must direct our expectations and hopes to a period yet to come.

Of this nature, among many others, is the prophecy contained in the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where we read as

follows:—"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (vers. 1, 2.).... "I say, then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" (vers. 11, 12.) "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy THEY ALSO MAY OBTAIN MERCY." (vers. 25—31.)

Here, it is evident, is a clear promise of SALVATION and MERCY to Israel; which salvation and mercy have not yet been vouchsafed, and to which therefore that people, and the whole Church of God, are privileged to look forward with joyful expectation.

With reference, however, to those prophecies relating to the prosperity of Israel, which are contained in the OLD TESTAMENT, and especially to those which speak of their restoration to their own land, it is not unusual with some interpreters, to consider them as having been fulfilled in the return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon.

Now some of the predictions of the older Prophets did undoubtedly relate to the Babylonish captivity, and to the return from it; and were therefore fulfilled in that event, and in the state of comparative prosperity, and the abandonment of idol worship, which distinguished the Jews in the period subsequent to it. But there are other prophecies which cannot be understood to have received their fulfilment in these events, and the following appear to be some of the marks by which they may be clearly distinguished; namely,—

1. *When the prophecies themselves occur in the writings of those prophets, who flourished subsequently to the return from Babylon.*

These prophets were Zechariah, Haggai, and

Malachi; and to avoid going into unnecessary detail, I will produce a single example from the first of these prophets.

Let us observe, then, what is said in the tenth chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah, beginning at ver. 6.

“ I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I WILL BRING THEM AGAIN TO PLACE THEM; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them. And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it and be glad; their hearts shall rejoice in the Lord. I WILL HISS FOR THEM, AND GATHER THEM; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among the people: and THEY SHALL REMEMBER ME IN FAR COUNTRIES; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I WILL BRING THEM INTO THE LAND OF GILEAD AND LEBANON; and place shall not be found for them. And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of

Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away. And I WILL STRENGTHEN THEM IN THE LORD; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord."

2. A second mark, by which prophecy respecting Israel may be known to be yet unfulfilled, is when *the prosperity predicted is declared to be in the days of the MESSIAH.*

Assuredly no prosperity or happiness has characterized the fortunes of Israel since the time when He appeared in the flesh who is nevertheless declared to be "the Redeemer of Israel;" nor has any restoration from captivity or from dispersion, nor any great and general spiritual renovation, taken place upon them since that period. Prophecies to such effect, therefore, must yet await their accomplishment.

Of this class is the following example, which you find in Jeremiah xxiii. 5—8.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I WILL RAISE UNTO DAVID A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH, AND A KING SHALL REIGN AND PROSPER, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. IN HIS DAYS JUDAH SHALL BE SAVED; AND ISRAEL SHALL DWELL SAFELY: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, be-

hold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The LORD liveth, which BROUGHT UP, AND WHICH LED THE SEED OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL out of the north country, and from ALL COUNTRIES WHITHER I HAD DRIVEN THEM; and THEY SHALL DWELL IN THEIR OWN LAND.”

3. Again, a third and very striking and decisive mark of unfulfilled prophecy respecting Israel is, *when JUDAH and ISRAEL ARE JOINED TOGETHER in the enjoyment of the promised mercies.*

You are well aware, brethren, that during the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, ten of the tribes of Israel revolted, and became a separate kingdom under Jeroboam; while the remaining two tribes only, those of Judah and Benjamin, remained faithful to their royal master. You are aware also, that these two kingdoms, which were distinguished by the names of Israel or Ephraim, and Judah, continued separate in all subsequent time; and that the former of them, that of Israel, was at length vanquished, and carried captive by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; as also that the latter kingdom, that of Judah, was likewise, a little more than a century afterwards, carried captive into Babylon. From this captivity in Babylon the kingdom of Judah did indeed return after the expiration of seventy years

of captivity : but from the captivity of Assyria, Israel has never returned even to this day. Judah and Israel have never yet, therefore, been united together, since they were first separated in the days of Rehoboam ; and still less has their union been distinguished by temporal and spiritual prosperity ; and this especially in the days of Messiah. We conclude, therefore, that all prophecies of this character are to be regarded as still unfulfilled. Of these I will quote two or three examples ; the first of which occurs in Isaiah xi. 10—13.

“ In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people ; to it shall the Gentiles seek : and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the OUTCASTS OF ISRAEL, and gather together the DISPERSED OF JUDAH from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off : Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.”

A second example of the same kind, you find

in Jeremiah xxxi. 27—34 : “Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL and the HOUSE OF JUDAH with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict ; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity : every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH : not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD : but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; After those days, saith the Lord, I WILL PUT MY LAW IN THEIR INWARD PARTS, AND WRITE IT IN THEIR HEARTS ; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD : for

they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Again a third example of this class of prophecies occurs in Ezekiel xxxvii. 15—24: “The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For JUDAH, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For JOSEPH, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and BRING THEM INTO THEIR OWN LAND: and I WILL

MAKE THEM ONE NATION IN THE LAND upon the mountains of Israel; and **ONE KING SHALL BE KING TO THEM ALL**: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and **THEY ALL SHALL HAVE ONE SHEPHERD**: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them."

I think it worth while to quote another example still, of this class of prophecies, which you will find in Hosea i. 10, 11: "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. **THEN SHALL THE CHILDREN OF JUDAH AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL BE GATHERED TOGETHER, AND APPIONT THEMSELVES ONE HEAD**, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel."

Indeed when it is borne in mind that the kingdom of ISRAEL has never yet returned from the As-

syrian captivity, it might well be considered that any prophetic representation relating to that kingdom alone, in which it is regarded as in a state of prosperity, must, independently of any other considerations, be determined, from that circumstance alone, to be yet unfulfilled. And of this character is the prophecy of Hosea xiv. 1—9 : “ O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the LORD : say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously : so will we render the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us ; we will not ride upon horses : neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods : for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely ; for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel : he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return ; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine : the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. EPHRAIM SHALL SAY, WHAT HAVE I TO DO ANY MORE WITH IDOLS ? I have heard him, and observed him : I am like a green fir-tree. From me is thy fruit found. Who is wise, and he shall understand these things ? prudent, and he shall

know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein.”

4. I may add one mark more of prophecy hitherto unfulfilled to the Jewish people, and that is *when it appears that the spiritual and temporal prosperity promised to them, is not to be succeeded by any subsequent destitution or calamity, but is to continue for ever.*

All prosperity which either Judah or Israel has hitherto enjoyed has been succeeded, alas! by spiritual destitution, and national degradation of the most exemplary kind. This destitution and degradation was itself the subject of prophecy, as you will see by turning to the Book of Deuteronomy xxviii., where you read as follows:—“But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; (ver. 15) the LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee, (vers. 36, 37) The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from

the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young. . . . And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee (ver. 49, 50, 52) And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease; neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would to God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the

sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.” (vers. 63—67.)

And, brethren, what has been the history of the house of Israel, and what is the condition or state of the descendants of Jacob at this day? Has not this word of prophecy been fulfilled; and do we not now, with our own eyes, behold the fulfilment of it to the letter?

Surely then, when we read prophecies and promises of prosperity which shall be followed by no adversity, of happiness which shall be succeeded by no sorrow, of union which never shall be broken, but shall continue until the final consummation of all things; we cannot conclude otherwise, than that these prophecies have not yet received their accomplishment.

And of this kind are the prophecies which occur in the Book of the prophet Ezekiel, xxxvii. 22: “I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and **THEY SHALL BE NO MORE TWO NATIONS, NEITHER SHALL THEY BE DIVIDED INTO TWO KINGDOMS ANY MORE AT ALL.**” And again, in the same chapter: “And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children **FOREVER; AND MY SERVANT DAVID SHALL BE THEIR**

PRINCE FOR EVER. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them : it shall be an everlasting covenant with them : and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for **EVERMORE....** And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when **MY SANCTUARY SHALL BE IN THE MIDST OF THEM FOR EVERMORE.**" (vers. 25, 26. 28.)

Another example will be found in the 39th chapter of the Book of the same prophet : ver. 23, &c. "And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity : because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies : so fell they all by the sword. According to their uncleanness, and according to their transgressions, have I done unto them, and hid my face from them. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name ; after that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses, whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations ; then shall they know

that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen : but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. **NEITHER WILL I HIDE MY FACE ANY MORE FROM THEM:** for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.”

Such then, dear brethren, are some of the marks by which, as I conceive, unfulfilled prophecies, relating to the descendants of Abraham, may be clearly distinguished from those which have already received their accomplishment in the past history of that remarkable and most interesting people ;—that people to whom we believers, gathered from among the Gentiles, are so deeply indebted ;—“ Who received the lively oracles, and have delivered them unto us. Whose are the fathers ; and of whom, as concerning to the flesh, **CHRIST** came who is overall, God blessed for ever.”

With one or two remarks, by way of appeal, and for the purpose of practical improvement, I will conclude this discourse.

Let me then ask you, brethren,

1. Whether you have not good encouragement to *expect*, and *pray for*, the restoration and conversion of the Jews ?

God's promises, brethren, as they are the sure foundation of the Christian's hopes, so are they the all-sufficient warrant of his prayers. And have we not seen how abundant they are; promises sufficient to assure us that God will yet look upon the affliction of his people; that He will remember the covenant which He made with their fathers; that he will "return to Jerusalem with mercies?"

O brethren, "pray for the peace of Jerusalem." Be ye the Lord's remembrancers, and "keep not silence; yea, give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make, Jerusalem a praise in the earth." And let me ask you also,

2. Is there nothing which you can *do*, to forward the designs of Jehovah towards his ancient people?

Dear brethren, it is an honour which God puts upon his saints, to employ them as instruments in his own hands, and to make them, as it were, participators in the accomplishment of his purposes of mercy towards their fellow mortals. And his designs respecting the recovery of the Jews, and their restoration to the divine favour, are not intended to be any exception to his general plan of proceeding in this respect.

With reference to any measures, the object of which should be to promote the national restoration of the Jews to their own land, I venture no remark, further than that I conceive it to be, at

least, the duty of a Christian nation and government like our own, so far to further this object, as to use their best endeavours to remove all hindrances, all stumbling blocks, out of the way. But with respect to their spiritual restoration to God's favour, I use no such reserve. Here I say to you, brethren, plainly, that it is at once your duty, your privilege, and your blessing, to be engaged in this cause, and to strive by every means in your power to promote their spiritual benefit. Has not God expressly declared by St. Paul, that *through your mercy they also shall obtain mercy?* (Rom. ii. 31.) Has he not declared that they shall prosper who love Jerusalem? (Ps. cxxii. 6.) Let us then, beloved brethren, be on the alert; let us be active, diligently persevering in this blessed department of the Lord's work,—that of preaching the Gospel to the Jews,—that of publishing to our elder brethren, of the stock of Abraham, the knowledge of salvation through the remission of their sins. Yea, let us listen to the command directed, it would seem, *peculiarly to ourselves in these remote regions of the globe*: and be encouraged by the promise with which it is accompanied, addressed to the objects of his unchangeably faithful regard: “Behold the Lord hath PROCLAIMED UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD: SAY YE to the daughter of

Zion, BEHOLD THY SALVATION COMETH; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them THE HOLY PEOPLE, THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD; and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A CITY NOT FORSAKEN."

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**MAN'S ORIGINAL STATE,
ETC. ETC.**

LECTURE III.

MAN'S ORIGINAL STATE;—THE DOMINION THEN GIVEN TO HIM OVER THE EARTH;—THE LOSS OF THAT DOMINION BY SIN, AND THE PROMISE OF FULL RESTORATION BY THE SEED OF THE WOMAN.

By THE REV. HENRY RAIKES, M.A.

CHANCELLOR OF CHESTER.

PSALM viii. 4.

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

WHAT a scene must this world of ours exhibit to those higher, purer intelligences, which we have every reason to believe are occupied and delighted in contemplating it! What a system of wonders must this material fabric exhibit to those, whose sight is capable of comprehending at once the greatest and the most minute of the operations that are being carried on here! Limited as we are by position, as well as in power, pinned down to a point on the vast expanse around us, seeing imperfectly and partially what we do behold, and beholding but little

of that which is to be seen ; we still feel our minds overwhelmed by the wonders we discover. Every step in advance opens fresh fields of observation. Above, below, on one side or the other, the light in which we walk diverges from the line we follow—spreads itself over an abyss which we cannot penetrate, till the mind is lost in the immensity that is revealed.

It thus has happened, that the most powerful intellects, the men who have seen most, and known most, of that system of which they form a part, have felt most of their own insufficiency to comprehend it ; and no one thinks that he knows anything of the world around him, but he who knows nothing as he ought to know. But if this be the effect produced by the view which man can take, limited and circumscribed as man must naturally be ; what must be the view exhibited to those, whose faculties, transcending ours as much as the angelic nature exceeds the human, grasp at a glance the whole system of these wonders ; and see at once what we have only learnt to conjecture by centuries of combined investigation and endeavour ? What must this globe of ours, for instance, appear to those, who can see at once the power by which its atoms are retained in their places, and the power by which the whole performs its annual and diurnal revolutions ; who can observe the

influence by which its orbit is maintained, and can at the same time discern the fluid which is propelled through an insect's veins, or the process of vegetation in a seed too minute to be discerned?

If there was a day when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, at beholding the fabric of our globe launched into space and entering on existence, is it reasonable to suppose that their wonder has ceased, or that their praise has been lessened, in watching its subsequent proceedings? Must we not rather think, that every succeeding day has increased this wonder, and added fervour to their adoration; and has not the steady unaltered continuance of the system, only served to write a law of gratitude on the hearts of those, who rejoiced in its first appearance?

But whatever may be the wonders belonging to the material world; we know and feel that they are nothing, if compared to those which the spiritual world includes. This earthly tabernacle is but the envelopment, the disguise, the incumbrance, and veil of the spirit that lies within; and little do they know of the real wonders of God's providence, of the depth of the riches both of his wisdom and knowledge, who, occupied with speculations on material things, dwell continually on them, and refuse to penetrate into those nobler

mysteries which are hidden in the world of spirits. There are discoveries there, which not only surpass our power of comprehension, but which exceed our nature. There are things to be studied there, which it is not lawful for man to utter. There are things to be seen there, which angels desire to look into ; things to which those blessed spirits turn, in order to refresh and strengthen their own devotion ; where they delight to learn more of the goodness of God, than can be known in a world which has remained unaltered ; where allegiance has been uniform, and obedience perfect ; amidst spirits who have never fallen, and angels who have kept their first estate.

Such, I say, is the scene which the world exhibits, when viewed as a spiritual object, and contemplated by spiritual beholders. They see it rising from the unexplored eternity which preceded its existence ; they see it made the field on which an exhibition of the character and being of God is to be displayed. They see a plan begun developed, extended, and carried on ; which is to illustrate, in a manner that never was done before, and with a power that was never employed before, the qualities and resources of Deity.

We may reasonably suppose, that the plan originally formed in the Divine Mind, and shared in its conceptions with none, " for who hath been his coun-

sellor?"—was viewed with astonishment and wonder, in its first development, by the hosts of heaven whom we consider as its contemplators. They saw man formed—formed by the hand of God, and formed in the very likeness of God. They saw the breath of God convey a spiritual existence to a material body. They saw a new order of beings added to creation; and they must have wondered at the lavish profusion of bounty which was poured upon this last-born of the children of God. Could their pure and holy nature have been capable of jealousy, and could they have seen anything but cause for love and adoration in the blessings provided for man, they might have borrowed the language of the Psalmist in another sense to express their own emotions; and they might have cried with different feelings from his: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" and might have questioned the justice which prepared such an abode for a being unknown and unproved by trial. Such then was the object, my brethren, that must have met their eyes, while the six days of creation were successively rolling on; and each successive day brought some new distinction, some fresh accession of honour, some increase of enjoyment to the being who was placed over all. The Creator looked down on that which He had made, and behold it was

very good. Nor can we doubt, that those blessed spirits, who behold his countenance and reflect his feelings, returned the complacency with which God beheld his work, and rejoiced as He rejoiced in contemplating it. And it was over this work, thus glorious and thus perfect, that man was placed supreme. The wonders of the creation were all made subject to him, and placed at his disposal. He might have said: "For me this globe was formed; for me this heaven was designed. For me, this earth was made; for me and my enjoyment it was enamelled with flowers, varied in surface, decked with all that can minister to pleasure and comfort: for me it was thus prepared, and under me it is placed. For me, likewise, this world of wonders which is above me, and all that moves and acts within it, was constructed. For me, this bright blue canopy of heaven was stretched on a firmament above my head; and a world of glories was manifested within it. For me, the sun issues out of his chambers in the east, rejoicing to run his course; pursues his appointed path, and sheds warmth and gladness as he passes. For me, the moon assumes her office when the sun goes down, and sheds a milder, softer light over the hours of repose. For me, the stars glitter in the firmament above me, and worlds of fire roll around, to do homage to man

whom God delights to honour. Each sense of which I am conscious, seems met by some provision for its indulgence, and feels its wish anticipated. For me, these flowers exhale their sweetness; for me these fruits mature their juices; and every want seems formed to be the medium of some fresh enjoyment." Such might have been the language, such must have been the feelings, of man, when man was first created; when he stood like a young heir in the midst of his inheritance, and wondered at the riches placed at his disposal. Around him was a world which the Almighty himself had pronounced to be very good; a world, in the formation of which, infinite wisdom, infinite goodness, infinite power had been employed; and which then exhibited to the eye of man a scene which has never been since beheld; a world unspotted by sin, in itself perfect, in its first design complete; and unmarred, untouched by any adventitious or external wrong. We read, that when the great Apostle of the Gentiles was caught up into the third heavens, he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. If it be lawful for the imagination of man now to wander where revelation supplies no sure or certain guidance: if it be lawful for man to infer from that which passes within himself, from feelings and thoughts of which he is conscious, the feelings and thoughts

of higher intelligences ; with what awe and curiosity may we suppose that angels must have beheld the occupant of this new creation ! How fondly they must have gazed on this being, now added to existence ; and how they must have wondered, whether it was an infant brother added to the family of heaven, and presented to their affections in the form of man ! Can we not conceive the delight with which they traced the resemblance of their heavenly Father's countenance in the creature which his hand had formed ; the interest with which they scanned the new-born capacities of his nature, the faculties of mind and body, the spiritual lineaments, the powers capable of infinite development and eternal growth ? Or if they turned from the being man, to the world in which he was stationed, and over which he was ordained to preside ; how they must have rejoiced to trace the nice adaptation of the material universe to the wants of its inhabitant, and the abundant provision made for his nourishment and comfort !

Such then was man, and such the condition of man, when the history of this world of ours commences, and the present dispensation was unfolded. It is not without reason that the record is placed within our reach, or that we are invited to take it up, to read, to study, and digest it. If the object of every revelation from God is to draw us nearer

to God ; if every thing that is written, is written for our admonition, and nothing that is revealed can be neglected with impunity ; then manifestly it is not more our duty than it is our interest, to endeavour to lift up the veil which conceals these mysteries, and to unseal the book which includes them. On the contrary, it is fit, it is desirable, that we should thus raise ourselves above the fogs and darkness of our present atmosphere, above the region of those cold and dim speculations which rise like vapours from the moist and muddy surface of a sinful world, and identify ourselves with that better world wherein dwelleth righteousness. It is fit that we should thus claim our privilege as children of God ; and, learning the way in which the inheritance that once was ours was lost, should learn likewise how that inheritance may be regained ; should thus study, by the light that is offered, the real character of our present position, and with it the means of its restoration. All this we feel is a reasonable, a natural object of inquiry, whether we regard our relations to God, or the change to be effected in ourselves ; and we see not how this can be done but by speculations such as these which we are engaged in ! We might say indeed, and without fear of contradiction, that it is due to our Maker to revert to that which was his original and pri-

mary bearing towards us ; and to acknowledge the largeness of his bounty, the extent of his love, by considering the circumstances of our creation. It is due to ourselves also, that in the same way, and by the same means, we should endeavour to call to mind the height from which we fell ; that we may know the real dignity of our nature, and long for its renewal. In every sense it is fit, and right, and our bounden duty, that we should take the widest possible view of the purposes of God towards ourselves ; and should overcome the influence of present things by calling into being the eternity that precedes, as well as the eternity that is to come. Such, then, was the scene in this awful drama, which first presents itself to our knowledge. Man stands before us a representation of the wisdom, the favour, and the goodness of God. The world around him displays, in forms more numerous and varied than can be told, the riches of the Creator's bounty. We see an amount of glory and of love accumulated on man, to which nothing can be added ; and while the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy, we say, " What is man that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man, that thou visitest him ? "

But we wait for a little while, and an entirely new scene presents itself to our view. We look to that

globe on which the light of the Almighty's countenance had been shining; over which angels had been hovering to inhale fresh streams of adoration; and the whole state of things seems altered. The Almighty's countenance is averted. The light which shone full and strong upon the earth, is eclipsed. Clouds cover that sky which used to be beaming brightness; and those blessed beings who had been wont to dwell on its contemplation with delight, mute and sad, are hanging down their heads; while feelings, in which astonishment and terror are struggling with pity and compassion, are the character of their countenances. We penetrate the gloom which overhangs the field of vision; and what do we next behold? We see man, with guilt on his countenance, and terror on his heart; flying from that God, in whom he used to delight; and endeavouring to elude his observation. The change in him has produced an universal change around him. The former state of things is broken up. The plenty, the peace, the happiness, which seemed to belong to earth; and which, planted there by the Almighty, had seemed to be like that tree the seed of which is in itself; now blighted, scattered, ruined, lost, are only known by records, or conjectured from the incidental resemblances which present themselves. And what, we ask, has occasioned this awful change,

this melancholy and overwhelming change, in man's condition?

One single fact has caused it all; and one fact alone accounts for all we see. Man has sinned. He has done what he ought not to do. He has deliberately transgressed his Creator's law. He has cast off his allegiance, and violently, wilfully broken the covenant that was between them. This bond dissolved, that allegiance severed, the tie that bound heaven to earth, and God to man, is gone. The blessings that resulted from that union—the joy, the peace, the happiness that dwelt on earth—are lost; and man is left to learn, through ages of increased alienation and aggravated misery, the wretchedness inseparable from a life of sin.

But is it possible, you may cry—is it possible that one single act of disobedience can produce such effects as these? Can one single act cancel the connection commenced under such sanctions, and sealed by such solemnities? Can one single act, on the part of man, change the whole character of the dispensation under which he lives, and spread the influence of the curse through every portion of the universe? Alas! my brethren, we speak like men, when we reason thus; and we speak not only like men, but like men blinded by self-love, and wilfully unjust, when we come to this conclusion.

Let it be but one act, and that act slight as you chose to make it ; but what signifies the slightness of the act, when it avows disobedience ; or if we choose to reason on the subject, does not the slightness of the temptation increase the guilt of the transgression in him who yields to it ? But be that as it may, men do not reason thus when they reason of things within their own province, and in which they are themselves concerned.

The mechanic does not think lightly of one single failure in his machine—of a catch, or a touch too slight to be noticed by an inexperienced observer ; for he knows that this one failure proves its entire insufficiency. The physician does not think lightly of one single failure in the system, for he knows that the one failure is death. And thus we need not feel surprise at hearing, that one single transgression is the cause of man's ruin, where the obedience which is required is perfect ; for the one error proves, as well as a thousand, that the allegiance is imperfect, and that the covenant tie is broken. But sad as the scene must have appeared, when man saw all around him changed, and angels turned away, and hid their face from the rebel, whom they had hoped to love as brothers ; how little was the real evil of sin known at that moment ; how little was the misery which man had brought upon himself by transgres-

sion, understood by man who had transgressed ! Oh it required ages after ages of repeated, accumulated suffering, to make man know, and feel, the reality of the guilt he had incurred ; the extent of the wretchedness he had brought upon himself. Age was to pass after age ; the sins of the fathers were to be visited on the children ; the burden which Adam bore was to be increased and swollen by the accumulated guilt of succeeding generations ; the evil that had worked in the parent was to be repeated in darker, more aggravated colours in the child ; lust was to be swollen beyond its natural proportion, and to become monstrous and unnatural by indulgence ; pride was to rise in its demands, till it became intolerable to all, and a curse to the very being who asserted it as his privilege ; ambition was to spread, till it felt the limits of the world were all too narrow to yield the satisfaction which it craved for ; covetousness was to go on increasing its desires with its possessions ; cruelty was to become fastidious from repeated exercise ; and man was to grow ingenious in tormenting his fellow creatures, in the vain hope of gratifying his hatred ;—all this was to be done, and done on earth, and done by man, in order to make man feel how low he had sunk through sin, how far he had gone from happiness in separating himself from God.

What would the feelings of angels have been—nay, what would the feelings of Adam himself have been, could he have beheld, on the evening of that day which witnessed the first transgression, the harvest of misery which was to be reaped by his posterity? But I turn from that detail which more appropriately belongs to the poet than the preacher, and simply say that “*in Adam all died.*” His sin involved his descendants in his ruin; and, hurled from the station which he occupied as the vicegerent of God, man ceased to exhibit in himself the mercy and the goodness of God, but became the subject of his just displeasure; a living instance of the never-failing wretchedness of the creature when separated from the Creator.

Why that displeasure failed to do its perfect work; why the rebel man was not at once destroyed; why the world, which he had defiled by rebellion, was not annihilated, as the potter destroys the work which is marred on the wheel, is a secret known to God alone, and hidden in the depth of his counsels. We know that it was spared. We know that man survived the moment of condemnation; and was doomed through many a successive generation, to drag the lengthening chain which reminds him of his guilt; and to drink the cup of sorrows which his own iniquity had mixed.

But even here, while justice demanded the execution of the sentence; while truth required the fulfilment of the judgment; and while holiness must have rejected the supplication of the criminal, even had the criminal been capable of praying; the goodness of God was still displaying its infinite resources; and mercy, a new attribute in God, as yet unknown, because hitherto unneeded, burst into being, and revealed itself to man.

But how did it reveal itself? Did it rise up to arrest the sentence justice had pronounced, and to absolve the sinner as soon as he had learned to tremble at the condemnation which was pronounced upon him? Nay, did it even attempt to extenuate that sentence, or to alleviate the curse which followed it? Did it speak to the rebel of comfort? or did it attempt to reconcile him to his doom by stating the mitigation which might be looked for in it? No, not one or the other! God was then only known as the Holy and the Just. Mercy had not yet learned the means by which to rise up against the decrees of truth, and to rejoice against judgment; and I feel that it is necessary to note—for the distinction, though generally overlooked, is too important to be neglected—that there is not, in the scriptural narrative, a shadow of that accommodating justice, of that mitigated law, which men are fondly endea-

avouring to discover ; and under which our human schemes of reconciliation and acceptance with God are imagined. Whatever man may fancy, as to the attributes of God ; in whatever way he may think that the one yields to the other, or supersedes the other ; the word of Scripture authorises no such compromise. Each quality of Deity, as it is delineated there, stands out in full relief ; nor does the wisdom of God require those deflections and curvatures, which human systems think it necessary to suppose, in order to effect the accomplishment of his ends. If you turn, for instance, to the book of Genesis, and to the narrative of the Fall, you find the sentence pronounced on the woman and the man, just as it issued from the mouth of Justice and of Truth. The sin of each is visited with its proper and specific penalty. Sorrow and subjection are named as the lot of woman ; labour and sorrow as the lot of man. And as each was in the transgression, each receives the condemnation.

But whence then is that hope derived which comes from mercy ? Is justice checked of its due proportions ? Is truth modified, and adapted to the circumstances of the case ; and does God withdraw his judgment in consideration for the sinner ?

These changes of purpose, these variations of

principle, may occur in the judgments of men, and are there consistent with the weakness and imperfections of those who judge ; but it is not so with God. “He is not a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent;” and though the representation of His ways may be accommodated, in words, to our conceptions, and may seem to vary with the circumstances, there can be no necessity for any contingent deviation where all has been foreseen ; and where that infinite knowledge, which comprehends the future as well as the past, has already provided for every event, and anticipated the irregularity of action, by the resource that has been ordained.

Whence then does the gleam of mercy rise, which is to relieve the darkness of the lot of man ? Whence is the stream of consolation to be drawn, to refresh the wilderness into which he is banished ? It comes from that rock from which streams of another kind had but just before been flowing. It comes, even from the justice of God. The justice which condemns the serpent, provides the means by which the condemnation of man shall be reversed : and the sentence pronounced on the originator of the sin, predicts the way by which the sinner may be pardoned. “The Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every

beast of the field ; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life : and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Here then behold the germ of promise which was to be expanded into hope. If the germ be small, let it not be despised on that account. Remember that harvests, which cover the surface of the earth, may be produced from the multiplication of a single seed. If the light be dim ; if it be hardly possible to discern, in this obscure denunciation, the mighty event which it predicted, and the glorious consequences that were to follow ; remember that the faint tinge which changes the eastern horizon, and which is hardly distinguishable from the night on which it presses, is the prelude to all the glories of meridian splendour.

Does the present notice seem doubtful, difficult, obscure ? O remember that too clear a manifestation of the merciful purpose of God was inconsistent with the condition of those whom he addressed ; and that they were unable to bear the revelation of that truth which the mercy of God had already determined to accomplish.

The sentence just pronounced was not to be reversed immediately. The curse was to rest upon the earth. Man was to learn the evil of rebellion,

by tasting its better fruits ; was to be led through all the stages of this godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of ; and to be prepared to welcome the offer of a Saviour, by knowing the real misery of those who are lost.

Under circumstances such as these, all that the goodness of God could offer was hope,—a hope that, in a way and measure not clearly described or easily understood, the sentence might be reversed,—hope, that the tempter who had thus triumphed in his victory over man, was to be foiled and crushed by one born from the very being whom he had just seduced ; and that the success which he had just gained against our first parents, should thus be turned against himself by the posterity of the woman.

But if the promise was ambiguous or obscure, it was certain. It proceeded from the mouth of God himself. It contradicted no attribute,—it came in collision with no known or accepted truth. Man caught at it as the sole rest that was left to him ; set forth on his pilgrimage over the world into which he was driven, with this as his sole support ; dwelt on it in each succeeding circumstance of life, and under every modification of belief ; interpreted it according to his own imaginations ; but, under all, watched for its development, waited for its fulfilment ; in a word,

watched for it as they watch who watch for the morning.

It was thus that when her first-born son was given, Eve caught at the hope which she thought was about to be realized, and said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Alas! many a mother was to know the pain which Eve experienced, before that hope was to be fulfilled. Many a generation was to see the light, before He, the promised seed on whom the destiny of our race depended, was to come. But through all the vicissitudes of the lot of man, this hope never ceased. Like the pillar of cloud that moved before the Israelites, it was the guide and the leader of the people of God. Like that, it offered shelter, comfort, and support to them that believed; and through the trackless desert of the world, it stood like a token of the presence and favour of God; a pledge of his present mercy, and a promise of better things to come.

Thus far, my brethren, I have endeavoured to fulfil the task committed to me. I have set before you, briefly and insufficiently, man's original state; the dominion then given to him over the whole earth; the loss of that dominion by sin, and the promise of full restoration by the seed of the woman.

There are different ways under which this mighty combination of events, which form the record of creation, may be contemplated.

I have chosen to consider it as the opening of a scheme, by which God intended to exhibit, to intelligences of every order, the riches both of his wisdom and his knowledge. I have supposed that this world, from its first creation, was an object round which the observance and affection of the hosts of heaven gathered. I have supposed, that they gazed on man, placed in the midst of the creation as its head and ruler, with wonder and delight; and that bursts of adoration rose towards the throne of heaven, while they saw the capacities with which man was endued, and the glories for which he was prepared.

The same field which then exhibited the goodness, and the power, and the wisdom of God, was soon to display his other attributes. The justice and the truth of God were next to be manifested, when this favoured child was to be deposed from his dignity, in consequence of transgression; and God was to resign his creature to the judgment that his sin deserved. And here so perfect was the justice, so inflexible the truth exhibited; that no charm belonging to the offender, no interest which former connections included, no tenderness of recollection for a work so exquisite and so pre-

cious, could avert the sentence due to his transgression. The creation, with all its glories, was rejected, when defiled by sin ; and the holiness of God was glorified in the sight of angels who had never sinned, when man heard the sentence uttered which condemned him. But this globe of ours, speck as it may seem in the infinite space of the universe, was yet to exhibit other truths, and to reveal secrets in the divine nature, which had not been known before ; “ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.” His wisdom, his power, his goodness, had been abundantly displayed. His truth, his justice, had been awfully exhibited on those angels, which kept not their first estate, and who are kept in chains under darkness, until the judgment of the great day. But the mercy, the long-suffering, the loving-kindness of God, had not yet found scope for development, and remained unexercised. A new exhibition was to be now made of these, and was to be made in man ; to the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God ; according to the eternal purpose which he had purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Eph. iii. 10, 11.) Such, we conceive, then, was the object proposed. This is the end of our creation. Man is formed holy and yet frail ; in the image

of God, but yet open to temptation ; that in him, thus prepared against trial, and yet subordinate to trial, God might shew forth all long-suffering, and vindicate the glory of his name ; “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” Above this, a cloud of witnesses are watching with wonder and delight the development of that mighty plan, which forms the history of the world ; but which in that history unfolds the breadth, and length, and height of that love of God which passes knowledge. But, in the midst of all this which is passing upon the earth, we see one nation which acts like a main spring to the whole machine, or rather is the heart of the system exhibited in the world. The light which was diffused over the surface of the whole, becomes concentrated in them. God separates them from the rest of mankind, and uses them for the unravelling of his scheme of mercy. Signs and wonders are multiplied around them, and they are thus marked out as a peculiar people, a people of inheritance. Terrible from their beginning, they are followed through the several stages of their history by tokens of divine protection. They are persecuted, but not destroyed ; cast down, but not forsaken. Through the earlier and more eventful periods of their history, a succession of prophets keep alive the flame of hope, and

adapt it to the circumstances of their hearers. The revelation gains distinctness under each successive notice. The character of the woman's seed, his form and nature, the time, the manner of his appearing, are gradually unfolded; till at the last, at the time which God had appointed, the promised seed is born; and the whole creation which had been groaning and travailing together in pain, rejoices in the manifestation, for which it had been longing.

Do we err then, my brethren, if we seek to draw your attention to the house of Israel; if we wish to enlist your sympathies in their behalf? or have we adopted an erroneous way of doing it, by endeavouring to shew that all that is to be known of God, is to be learned through them; and that every ray of light converges to them, and diverges from them? Yes, what was the glorious company of the prophets raised up among them, but a succession of lights in the world, who handed from one to the other the lamp of promise, which was to enlighten the world at large? What were the glories of the tabernacle, the splendour of the temple, the service of the altar, the ritual of the law, but emblems of that better glory which was hereafter to be revealed; and to be revealed to all mankind? How, then, can we hope to understand the truth, if we

neglect the preparation ; or how shall we come to Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, if we refuse the guidance which God has offered, or despise the testimony which He has given us of his Son ?

Of a subject, general as this is, it seems difficult to make any close or particular application. We have been contemplating the deep things of God ; the mighty scheme by which the spiritual world is carried on,—things which angels desire to look into. It is not easy to pass from the contemplation of the universe to that of individuals ; nor is it expedient to draw rules for private conduct from that which is obscure in the ways of God's providence. But each subject has its appropriate feeling ; and if it can but be made to produce that, it is not contemplated in vain. While we turn to other parts of the sacred record, then, to awaken the feelings of love, of fear, of godly sorrow, or godly diligence ; let us derive from this, which we have now been contemplating, wonder and awe. Wonder, at the gracious purposes of God towards ourselves ; awe, at the eminence to which we seem raised in consequence ; and gratitude to Him for the persevering patience with which his purpose has been accomplished.

Nor let us imagine that wonder and awe are barren, unproductive sentiments, and unfitted to

roduce any salutary effect upon our hearts. The wonder of the world, I grant, is no better than a plea for vacancy. Awe may be the effect of weakness, and an effect which perpetuates its cause. But he who is led to wonder at the mysteries of God's providence; he who is made to feel awe in contemplating his purposes; he who is led to cry out, "Oh the depth of the riches, both of the goodness and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out;"—this man has gained a feeling which it is well worth his while to secure. This man shall return from such holy and absorbing contemplations, like one who has been admitted into communion with God. His countenance shall shine, like that of Moses, with the light which he has caught from his interview with the Father of spirits. He shall come back to the discharge of ordinary duties, raised above the ordinary causes of disturbance. He shall see clouds resting on the surface, and yet fear no evil: shall see the world heaving with revolutions, and feel no disquietude in himself; but convinced that all things are in the hand of God, and that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, he shall view the face of society agitated by change, and name this as the cause of his composure: "Who shall separate me from the love

of Christ?" Nay, he will add, as the ground of his security, "In all these things we are more than conquerors. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor angels, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But finally, while we gaze with awe on this mighty and mysterious scheme; transfer some portion of those feelings with which you contemplate the scheme, to those who have been the agents employed in its development; to the Jewish people, to the Israel of God. Think of the language in which they are themselves addressed, and learn the reverence due to them from the events in which they were concerned. "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire as thou hast heard, and live?" Or hath "God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, and by signs, and by wonders, and by a mighty and a stretched-out arm? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God, there is none else beside him."

Think then of this people, wonderful in their original, wonderful in their elevation, and more wonderful still in their preservation; and learn to

trace in them the wonderful purposes of God towards ourselves. Rise, through the Jewish nation, to the knowledge of the God of Judah—of that great Jehovah, the great I AM, whose glory it is that He changeth not. In these records, see the depth of the foundation on which your faith is built, and rejoice in the multitude of witnesses by whom you are surrounded.

But let the gratitude which you must thus feel to God, descend on those whom God has employed in this work. Venerate the hands by which this record has been written, and preserved, and testified. Let God be honoured in those whom he has chosen. Let the ancient glory of Israel be reflected on their posterity, and let them be beloved for the fathers' sake. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." (Deut. xxxiii. 29.)

THE
UNFOLDING OF THE PROMISE
IN THE
CALL OF ABRAHAM;
&c. &c.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The form in which the following discourse issues from the press, differs in several respects from that in which it was delivered from the pulpit. As originally composed and preached, it was considered to trench, in some of its parts, upon the subjects allotted to those brethren by whom the writer was to be succeeded. In that opinion, judiciously formed, and kindly expressed, the author deemed it at once his pleasure and duty to acquiesce. It was perhaps hardly necessary to mention a circumstance of so little importance. The apology, however, if needed, may be sought in the desire of explaining the discrepancy to those who, having heard the sermon, may be disposed to read it.

LECTURE IV.

THE UNFOLDING OF THE PROMISE IN THE CALL OF ABRAHAM;—WITH THE BLESSINGS SECURED TO HIM, AND TO HIS SEED, AND TO ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH, BY THE PROMISE, COVENANT, AND OATH OF GOD.

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GEN. xii. 1—3.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee : and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing : and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee ; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

EVERY portion of Holy Scripture is a part of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. While that Gospel is especially concentrated, according

to the greatness of his majesty and the beauty of his love, in the New Testament, it is amply, though mysteriously, diffused over the pages of the Old. So that the science of salvation can no more be well understood, without a knowledge of Divine dealing with mankind recorded in the earlier Scriptures, than a student in geometry could fully enter into the steps and conclusions of any advanced proposition in Euclid, if he were unacquainted with those by which it had been preceded. Rent as the inner vail of the temple now is, from the top to the bottom, by the death of Christ, so that every believer may have entrance into the Holiest by his blood, he will see comparatively little of its wonders, without passing previously through the outward sanctuary; and studying, as he goes, its mystic furniture, of history, type, prophecy, and ceremonial. The work of salvation has been carried on since the fall of man, when the whole scheme of redemption was originally enwrapped in a single promise; which has been gradually unfolding its blessed import, from that awful hour of human misery and divine compassion; and which is yet to be evolved, until its full and final import shall be exhibited in the glory of the Mediator, and the ineffable happiness of his Church. The various dispensations of Jehovah, Patriarchal, Levitical,

and Christian, originate in the same design, belong to the same procedure, and are directed towards the same issue. They are all to be reckoned, therefore, as several parts and movements of one machine, meant and calculated, in the riches of Almighty power, unerring wisdom, and love unsearchable, to accomplish one great plan and purpose of his will.

But as some portions of a vast machine press themselves more forcibly upon the eye of an examiner than others, both on account of their individual beauty, and high importance to the general design, so is it in the Holy Scriptures. Every part is momentous; but the dealings of God with Abraham, with his natural and foederal posterity, to the present moment, as well as in their future restoration and blessedness, which the beaming lights of Scripture prophecy, enable us to see and realize with infallible certainty, are full of deep and thrilling interest, and vitally concern the faithful and expecting Church of God.

To this high subject of historic recollection, of present interest, and of coming fulfilment, your attention is called in the present course of Lectures, wherein we mean to testify of the privileges, sins, miseries, judgments, and glory of God's chosen heritage. That subject cannot be indifferent to any man who feels his interest in Reve-

lation, the goodness of God in Christ Jesus to his Church ; and the coming of that time, when salvation shall once more go forth in its all-conquering might from Sion—when kings shall come to her light, and nations to the brightness of her rising—until Jew and Gentile hath one common Saviour, and the glorified Messiah shall be all in all to both.

The design of these Lectures, the importance of an accurate knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures, the spirit in which they should be studied ;—the needful rules whereby the investigator must thankfully submit to be guided in their interpretation, as God's ancient host by the pillar of fire in the wilderness ;—man's original state of holiness and happiness in his pure Maker's image ;—the dominion then given to him over the earth ;—the loss of that dominion by sin ;—and the promise of full and overflowing restoration by the seed of the woman,—have been already laid before you, as needful preliminaries to what may follow, concerning the fortunes of Israel and their momentous aspect upon the Gentile Church.

“THE UNFOLDING OF THE PROMISE IN THE CALL OF ABRAHAM ; WITH THE BLESSINGS SECURED TO HIM AND TO HIS SEED, AND TO ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH, BY THE PROMISE, COVENANT, AND OATH OF GOD,” is the subject

with which I am entrusted. It is a field so vast, of interest so various, of fruitage so luxuriant, that I can aim at nothing more than to bring you towards a very few of the high places, whence you may survey some of the glories of the scene. Would you behold them more at large; walk through the length and breadth of the land, in close and searching examination of prophetic Scripture and its evangelical exposition. If a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol shall refresh you, the door of the vineyard is open; pass through it, and pluck more largely for yourselves.

The subject before us naturally divides itself into two parts.

I. THE BLESSINGS ANNOUNCED BY JEHOVAH TO THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL.

II. THE SECURITY GIVEN BY JEHOVAH FOR THEIR BESTOWMENT.

And may the holy Spirit of Light, and Love, and Truth, bless the consideration to us all.

I. THE BLESSINGS ANNOUNCED BY GOD TO ABRAHAM.

There can be no reasonable ground to doubt that the great outline of salvation, however partially veiled in the mysterious language of the first promise to fallen man in Paradise, was essentially understood by our first parents, and by them trans-

mitted to their posterity, as a refuge from hopelessness, and therefore from obdurate rebellion. It was a Goshen of brightness wherein hope might dwell; while all beside was as the after-darkness of Egypt, shrouded in which, no man stirred from his place. They lived and died in the faith of that promise, as subsequent events developed and explained it; having found in it the power of God to their salvation. Eve assuredly understood its deep mystery of grace to some extent, although not the exact mode of its fulfilment, when on the birth of her first-born, Cain, she exclaimed, as the original seems to be literally rendered, "I have gotten a man, Jehovah, his very self." She imagined that the promised seed was then born unto the world; and therefore that the predicted man so born was indeed Jehovah the Deliverer. Her interpretation was necessarily faulty in one great particular. Cain might be rightfully called *her* seed; but he was not her seed *exclusively*; and bitterly did the first infidel and the first murderer convince her of the error into which she had fallen.

A long period intervened between the fall of man, and the advent of his Redeemer, God manifest in the flesh. It seemed, therefore, that faith and hope would need some intermediate support, something visible to the Church's eye,

and firm beneath the Church's footing, which might connect the first promise of salvation in Eden, with the stupendous act whereby it was effected upon Calvary ; thus re-establishing the guilty creature, justified and reconciled to God, in the dominion from which he had been rightfully deposed.

Very graciously and wisely was this want supplied. Abraham appeared near the middle period, between that wherein the first Adam ruined, and the second Adam restored, the world. Thenceforward the way of life cast up for sinful man in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, became more plain and cheerful to those who lived in faith upon his future manifestation and office. They had not indeed seen the promises fulfilled in the Word made flesh ; but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them.

Some knowledge of the divine truth had been preserved in the family of Shem ; but it was preserved as a spark ready to be extinguished, or as life in one about to give up the ghost. It was therefore necessary that a particular people should be expressly separated from the idolatrous world, to become the depository of saving truth, to receive the law of types, and the visions of prophecy which might testify of the redeeming Seed of the woman his sufferings, and the glory that should follow. They were to prepare the way

for his approach, when the hour of manifested mercy should strike, and the Church of God, Eve's antitype, should indeed have gotten the "Man Jehovah, his very self." They were to preserve the oracles of God, when recorded for the light and life of a darkened and ruined world. The great purposes of the Divine Mind could hardly have been so well answered, if the Jew and ill-taught believers of the patriarchal Church had been mingled among the heathen for two thousand years.

Abraham, then having only the name of Abram, was the person chosen by the Lord for this high honour. He is among the most illustrious characters whose history is recorded in the pages of inspiration. In him we have a very striking display of the exceeding riches of Divine grace. For when he and his father Terah were serving other gods, and the patriarch was grown old in this idolatrous service, even then, as the martyr Stephen declares, the "God of glory appeared unto him:" thus manifesting, in the father of the faithful, the same grace and mercy which were displayed in the first promise. That infinitely merciful declaration was made immediately after Adam, so far from expressing any gracious sorrow for his sin, impiously charged it upon God: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." And even when our fallen

race had profited so little by the Deluge, that the immediate posterity of Noah were worshipping strange gods, in this fulness of general guilt Jehovah vouchsafed to call Abraham to the high distinction of being Father of the Faithful. To the remembrance of this act of mercy Isaiah thus invites his descendants; "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and to Sarah that bore you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him."

In Abraham, also, we have a very delightful manifestation of the privileges which God bestows upon his people. For this is the honourable title given to him in the Sacred Scriptures, "Abraham was called the friend of God." If it has been esteemed among the highest honours to which the greatest subjects can aspire, to be called the king's friend; how transcendant the privilege of being thus named by Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords? More especially when this title was not like some which are conferred upon their favourites by earthly sovereigns, mere nominal titles, but a substantial, absolute, glorious reality. For as a friend he frequently visited him; as a friend he held communion with him; as a friend he made

known to him his future purposes ; and as a friend he comforted him in the hour of trial ; “ Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.”

Nor was this privilege limited to him alone ; it belongs to all who are partakers of his faith. These are the gracious words spoken by our Lord to his disciples : “ Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”*

Abraham stands out, also, as a very plain and beautiful example of that great principle of faith, which must influence the people of God, a principle which may be termed the *instrumental*, whilst the promised Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the *meritorious*, cause of the salvation. To this effect is the testimony of the Holy Ghost—by St. Paul : “ by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed ; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” Again, when Jehovah brought him forth abroad, and said, “ Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them ; and he said, So shall thy seed be ;”

* John xv. 15.

Moses records, that he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness.”

This lively faith of the Patriarch has procured him the glorious title of *father of the faithful*,—and of this lively faith, that we must be partakers, would we enjoy the blessings of Abraham. It was, however, his great honour, that, while the elders, who, like Noah, had found grace in the eyes of the Lord, were in previous ages mixed with the surrounding idolaters, Abraham was selected as the father of that nation whom the Lord was pleased to choose as a separate people, to make known the glory due to his name, and to be the race from whom the promised Seed should spring. Concerning his descendants, the Lord said, “This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.”

But it is more than time that we endeavour to ascend along the path of Scriptural record to the mount of Pisgah, whence we proposed to overlook the promised land, and the fortunes, past and future, of God’s covenant heritage and people.

1. The first gracious engagement entered into with Abraham, by his Almighty Friend, illustrates the consideration and tenderness of his love. Abraham was childless: *and the Lord promised him an abundant offspring.* “I will make of thee

a great nation.”* And again: “I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be numbered.”† Yet more: “Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And He said unto him, So shall thy seed be.”‡ Yet further still: “Thy name shall no more be called Abram; but thy name shall be called Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, ...and kings shall come out of thee.”§ “Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation.”|| And once more, yet a thousand cubits along this river of sanctuary promise. “In multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore.” ¶

At this moment, as I said, the Patriarch was childless; and God’s engagement must have contradicted every suggestion of sight, and sense, and human apprehension; for how should he be the father of a great nation? But God’s word is fulfilled in its season. The promise was made good in the posterity of Hagar. It was made good, according to the more particular purpose of the Most High, when Balak complained that the sons of Jacob covered the face of the earth. It was

* Gen. xii. 2.

† Gen. xiii. 16.

‡ Gen. xvii. 5.

§ Gen. xvii. 5, 6.

|| Gen. xviii. 18.

¶ Gen. xxii. 17.

made good in the increase and prosperity of the Jewish people within the land of Canaan. Even now, in their low and lost estate—peeled, scattered among the nations—oppressed, insulted, persecuted and despised,—a standing miracle to attest, beyond all gainsaying, the truth of the declaration, and the righteousness of judgment in God,—their numbers may well challenge our surprise and admiration.

The multitudes of the descendants thus assured, a country must be provided in which they may dwell. Jehovah therefore appears, in order to give Abraham welcome into Canaan : “ Unto thy seed will I give this land. I will give to thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger; all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.” The first or literal part of this engagement admits not of doubt or dispute; as little can its fulfilment to Abraham’s natural seed be questioned, according to that meaning. After they had sojourned as strangers in Canaan, and as bondmen in Egypt, God gave each of its tribes their allotment in the promised country, by signs and wonders; and long maintained them in its possession, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, against all their enemies round about. This land, the first fruits of those vast realms and nations who should become Abraham’s gracious seed, when the Divine purposes shall receive their fulfilment, seemed only taken for

a little time from the Gentiles, and has been of them won back, and wasted by violence. It is now in the hand of strangers. But as no lapse of time can deter the sovereign from recovery of his right, and resumption of his dignities, however long they may have slumbered in abeyance; so no obstacle which human or Satanic force may summon up, can hinder the people of the God of Abraham, the natural posterity of that great ancestor, as well as foederal head, from returning to Jerusalem, rebuilding the city of their fathers, and making it the glorious centre of a dominion whose circuit shall embrace the world. These children after the flesh too, must be raised to the high and blessed privilege of spiritual sonship. The Spirit of God must enter into them, and they must live. They will not only be taken out of their graves, and recombined into a separate people, from the present universal dislocation and dispersion over the globe, but they will eventually embrace the Messiah. The Father of the Faithful must have known, and lived in the faith of a glorious future upon such knowledge, that the numerous seed and many nations were not to comprise only his actual descendants; but tribes and kindreds, tongues and people, spiritually born to him. His natural posterity, to whom God's engagements in their literal meaning belonged, were only one people; as Abraham was

well aware, from the limitation, first unto Isaac, to the exclusion of Ishmael, and next unto Jacob, to the exclusion of Esau. Canaan itself, a small and narrow land, was incapable of containing more than those who should spring from his own loins. He must, therefore, have looked in faith beyond them. He must have contemplated a progeny spiritually resembling himself, who, conformed to him in gracious dispositions, should be called his seed; even as under the first promise of redemption the wicked of all ages are denominated the seed of the serpent; and as the devil was afterwards named by our Lord, the father of murderers and liars. The many nations which God promised with such pomp and grandeur of expression, could not, in Abraham's eye, have been merely political; for they were the gracious reward of his devoted faith and obedience, in walking before God perfectly, and especially in offering up Isaac at his mysterious command. To found a mighty nation might be the lot of some impious conqueror. And some such had actually done their part of blood and conquest upon the theatre of the world. The promised seed, then, numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sand by the sea shore, was to be a seed of believers, united to Abraham by descent, through the parentage of his faith; who should come to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,

in the kingdom of God ; those of whom the Apostle speaks, who could have no portion among the natural and national kindred of God's happy friend. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise; know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

This spiritual character of his progeny makes their numbers so particularly interesting : these numbers, as we have already noticed, were to equal, or rather surpass, the blessing pronounced upon our first parents. Then "God blessed them, and said, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth ;" but here is a blessing which the earth, in its present state at least, could not satisfy. A seed is promised to Abraham numerous as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore. The mind is almost lost in contemplating this multitude, innumerable as the sands which cover the shore of every sea, and of every ocean, in the four quarters of the globe. But as the Almighty is pleased to make use of another emblem, to make known these numbers, namely, the stars of heaven, we are at once led to anticipate the future glories of this seed. The emblem reminds us of the beautiful description of the prophet Daniel,* foretelling the wonders of the resur-

* Dan. xii. 2.

rection : " They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." The children of promise therefore, though like the sands they are countless in their numbers, are not like this barren dust, of little worth ; they shall be seen as stars in the midst of heaven, receiving, like the planets, their full-orbed lustre from the Sun of righteousness, who shall then appear in his meridian glory. How vast, how stupendous the idea which this early link in the chain of prophecy presents to the mind ! What then will be the ineffable glories of that day, when every one of these stars shall appear in that new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and a star shining with rays of purest love, and rejoicing the eye by breaking forth with the brightest glory. May every hearer or reader of this discourse have his sphere in this world of brightness and of bliss.

2. The second part of the engagement, on the part of God to Abraham, is that which, in an especial manner, republished and confirmed, or rather fully unfolded, the grand paradisaical promise to our first parents at their fall,—the great lever for their recovery, the great light brought down from heaven to guide and comfort them,—*In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed ; Abraham shall*

*surely become a great and mighty nation ; and in him shall all nations of the earth be blessed :** and again, according to our translation, "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." That prospective blessing to all nations is connected with the renewal of the curse pronounced against the serpent, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" The blessing is to many : the curse refers to one, the apostate angel, the god of this world, who brought sin, and shame, and ruin upon it. This gracious paradisaical promise was again and again renewed ; for Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom knew it to be the foundation on which faith must rest, through the many ages to elapse before the advent of Christ. In these few words the germ of the covenant of salvation now much expanded, is brought before the eye of the Church, as it was exhibited to her earthly representative. He must have reasoned on this wise concerning the gracious communication of God : "If all the families of the earth are to be blessed in me, the mercy cannot have its existence vested in myself personally : for I shall not live to behold it. This mysterious good and benediction must arise therefore from one who shall be born of me ; who, himself eminently distinguished of God, shall

* Gen. xxii. 18 ; xxvi. 4.

bring with Him a blessedness, of which the length and breadth shall embrace the whole earth. He must therefore be not man only, but God also ; though He must assume human nature, in order to be born as my descendant. Thus did this divine communication involve, in a few simple words, that mystery of an incarnate Saviour, which holy patriarchs and prophets, in subsequent ages, more largely and clearly explained for the faith and hope of God's waiting Church. The world liberated from the yoke of Satan, death and hell destroyed, the law fulfilled, and its curse removed ; sin forgiven, eternal salvation provided, and the kingdom of heaven open to all believers ; were among the mercies comprised in this assurance. These unspeakable blessings broke upon Abraham as the dawning of that day of Christ which our Lord himself declares he "saw and was glad." The glorious light was made known to him in a most affecting manner. His faith was to be tried and tested by a process of unexampled severity ; but although so painful at the moment, the design of Jehovah was to rejoice his heart with a clear view of the promised Deliverer. The inspired narration informs us that " It came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham : and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take thou thy son, thine only son Isaac,

whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”* Accordingly Abraham, at the command of God, rose up early in the morning, took Isaac his son, clave the wood for a burnt offering, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Upon seeing it, he took the wood and laid it upon his son, and he took the fire in his hand, and they went on together, as with one consent. Isaac said to his father, “Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.” The altar was built, the wood laid in order, his son bound, and laid on the altar, with his own full acquiescence. Abraham then stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. But now the Angel of the Lord, the messenger of the everlasting covenant, said, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.” At this moment also “Abraham lifted up his eyes, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in

* Gen. xxiii. 1, 2.

the stead of his son.” These interesting facts are all recorded in the narrative. And what means the whole of this deeply interesting record? Surely it is nothing less than a representation of our blessed Saviour. Isaac is but the type. The reality is that of which our Lord speaks, when He says, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad.” For when God directed the Father of the Faithful to take his son, and offer him up as a sacrifice to Him, He saw him as a sinner under the curse of a broken law. For this must always be remembered, that whatever affections we may have for those dearest to us, divine justice may at any moment claim them at our hands. As transgressors they have all forfeited their lives, and are liable to be called upon for the penalty. Isaac, therefore, although a partaker of divine grace, was liable, as a sinner, to the forfeiture of his life!

Again, Abraham saw in Isaac a type of our blessed Saviour; of him whom his heavenly Father, with infinitely greater willingness than Abraham, and without any obligation on his part, offered up freely for our sins; and who, with the same love to sinners as his heavenly Father, and with still greater readiness than Isaac, obeyed Abraham’s call, suffered the word, or his cross, to be laid upon him; the fire of Divine wrath to enter into

his soul ; the knife, or rather the sword of Divine justice, not only to be lifted up, but actually to take its course ; fulfilling the denunciation of Jehovah by the prophet Zachariah : “ Go forth, O sword, against the Shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts.” This Abraham saw.

Surely it delights the heart thus to trace the Saviour’s love. It appeared in meridian splendour when He died on Calvary ; for though the natural sun was darkened, as if sympathising with its Maker’s sufferings, the glories of his love so completely burst through all the darkness, as to lighten heaven itself with its radiance. A crucified noontide was its brightness ; but here were the streaks of the dawn ; for Isaac is but like a morning star, to usher in the Sun of righteousness ; the wood and the fire are only the emblems of the nails, and the thorns, and the cross. They are both alike ; there is a sweet fragrance of love in them. Hence the cry of the Church’s faith, “ Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense ;” that is to say, Until life and immortality are fully brought to light, by the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Saviour, I will get me to these various typical sacrifices, of which the myrrh and the frankincense

form a part of the offered incense. But not to detain you with these outgoings of the heart—though it is impossible, when speaking upon so clear a type of our Saviour's love, to be altogether silent—let it suffice, that by the typical representation of this love in his son Isaac, Abraham saw the day of Christ; and in this sight he was glad as a believer, though yet an infant in the life of faith. All the posterities of Adam were cursed in him. God here promises in Abraham and his seed, and by him in the Seed of the woman, that all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Now this blessing must extend to, and embrace, all the good whereof men are deprived by the curse; or it cannot establish the claim and assumption. Its declaration was delayed from the promise in Eden to that in Ur, probably because the Most High intended to leave mankind to walk for a long and dark period in their own way, that thus he might display the sovereignty and freeness of that mercy through which he had provided and promised a Deliverer; and that thus he might make trial of the wisdom of man in seeking out for the person of the Redeemer, and the nature of the blessing which he would confer. In this most precious promise, therefore, was that gold deposited in the keeping of the Church, which after many generations was brought forth, and stamped with the image of

God. To the person and offices of the Divine Mediator all the promises emanating from the covenant of redemption relate. In Him in whom grace was given as before the foundation of the world, they all meet as the point of concourse and convergence. Harmoniously then as every passage of a Saviour's love should strike upon our ears, a peculiar delight, should be felt by those who have experienced the power of redeeming mercy in this promise to Abraham, which not only gives, in general terms, an assurance of pardon and peace to the world, but rests it in an individual and his posterity, separated and sanctified unto that end, for safe keeping unto the coming of the promised Seed. A Bible, a Gospel, and a Saviour, are the blessings thus given to Abraham, and left by him as a rich legacy to the Church. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made : he saith, Not unto seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Many nations of the earth have been already blessed in Abraham's seed, with knowledge of the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent ; and of that salvation for which He became incarnate, suffered, laboured, agonized, died to purchase ; and which, by his Spirit, he conveys as her most precious bequest, whether for time or eternity, to his Church. He hath made these things known to his holy Apos-

ties by inspiration of God. By their holy and burning zeal, the glad tidings of great joy have been spread throughout numerous lands ; while they sounded in the ears of Abraham's spiritual seed, to the conversion of millions, and by them hath he sprinkled many nations. All have not yet indeed heard the Gospel ; nor have all obeyed it in the gladness of love, to whom its message of mercy hath been preached. But the prophets have foretold, and we believe the record of their inspiration, that at some future period, when He only knoweth who hath reserved the times and seasons in his own power, the obedience of ransomed and converted man shall comprehend the whole race on earth. His name shall endure for ever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and men shall be blessed in Him : all nations shall call Him blessed.*

3. The third blessing announced to Abraham, was "*Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.*" Here we may observe that the singular number is used ; *Thy seed* shall possess the gate of *HIS* enemies ; not *THEIR* enemies, but *HIS* enemies : the word therefore regards Christ himself. And it contains a still further development of the first promise : The Seed of the woman shall bruise the

* Macknight on the Epistles, Vol. II.

serpent's head. The gate was, in ancient days, the seat of power, the place where the elders assembled, where justice was administered, and where the king held his court. In eastern countries it is still the same even at the present day. The Turkish empire is called "*the Porte*," or "*the Gate*," as if to express that it was THE power or THE empire. When our Saviour, also, would express the might of Satan, as opposed to the truth on which He builds his Church; He says, *the gates of hell* shall not prevail against it.

What, then, is the gate or seat of Satan's power? It is death. Here is the strength of Satan with respect to man; for was it not that by his disobedience to God man has made himself liable to the curse? Whatever force Satan employed, he would have no real power, except in virtue of being enthroned on death; this so far makes us his lawful captives, that he can claim of Divine Justice that the sentence should be executed.

But here the promise breaks forth into light and life. Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; or that the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head, should obtain a victory over the grave. Like the first promise, the language is metaphorical, but it is highly expressive. The patriarch was here confirmed in the type that he had seen. He had, in a figure, beheld Isaac re-

stored to him from the grave, and now this figure was explained by the promise that his seed should possess the gate of his enemies; that he should triumph over death and the grave; and thus give to his people a joyful resurrection. Abraham had before this a general hope of the resurrection of the body; for St. Paul mentions, that by faith Abraham offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure. But now this hope was much confirmed. He who should possess the gate of his enemies was engaged to break up the realm of death, and to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

But we leave this ground, in which so much treasure lies well worth the seeking, and consider very briefly—for lengthened space may not be asked by me from your patience and your family duties,—

II. THE SECURITY GIVEN BY JEHOVAH, FOR THE FULFILMENT OF ALL HIS ENGAGEMENTS.

Here, as under the former head, I am not left to wander in the paths of my own imagination. The blessings on which we have glanced were se-

cured to Abraham and to his seed, and to all the families of the earth, by the *promise, covenant, and oath* of God.

(1.) *They are secured by His promise.*

A divine injunction implies, in the very nature of things, the fitness of an entire obedience. Any manifestation of the will of God, involves the creature in obligations which it would be the most guilty rebellion to oppose. The sovereignty of Jehovah implies the absolute subjection of man to its exercise. His Omnipotence can enforce submission ; His Wisdom claims to be implicitly trusted ; His Beneficence declares that his purposes are kind ; and his Holiness gives assurance that they have unmingled good for their end and object. When that command, therefore, was made to Abraham by the Most High, “ Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee,”—it was bound upon him most imperatively, although no reason had been assigned, and no promise annexed. But the condescension of God induced him to accompany the exercise of supreme prerogative with such promises as, once received into the heart, subdued all opposition, and made duty on his part not only prompt but delightful. Thenceforward he lived upon them ; thenceforward, as their security is inviolable, and their dura-

tion commensurate with the dispensation of grace, they open the box of spikenard to the believer's mind for his refreshment. They are registered in the word of God for the assurance of faith, and for the comfort of those who receive them in simplicity and singleness of heart. These promises partake of the catholicity of the patriarchal dispensation, of which the great characteristic was universality; because the original promise to lost man in Eden, was, for salvation by the woman's seed, extended to his whole ruined race, that is, for ample means of salvation to them all. It is a promulgation and extension of that engagement on the part of God,—a proclamation of universal mercy. But then these promises have also some features in common with the Levitical dispensation, which Abraham's call touched upon and introduced, in exclusive continuance among the immediate descendants of the patriarch. They again expanded into universality under the Christian dispensation; because, as in the patriarchal, so in this the last and noblest of all God's cycles of grace in revelation, men were taught to look unto a universal Saviour; the patriarchal believer to rest his soul on a Deliverer yet to come; the Christian to rejoice in his advent, as Immanuel, God with us already.

These exceeding great and precious promises are like those constellations upon which Abraham

was commanded to go forth abroad, and count the stars whereof they were composed. At first a few of the most brilliant would command his eye; but the longer he looked, the more numerous would others come forth; until the whole heaven would be filled with their glory. Even so, I say, with the promises of God to Abraham, and to his spiritual Seed. Some glorious things are spoken by the seers of God, which instantly arrest the mind. Their application and their grandeur are undeniable. But these are not all. The more closely we examine, the more amply shall we find the prophetic heaven filled with others less sparkling, but neither less significant nor less precious. And there is perhaps no prophet, from Moses to Malachi, who does not throw a larger or a lesser light upon the three grand epochs of the past, present, and future history of the seed of Abraham; their expulsion from Canaan, and dispersion among the nations then fixed and stable; their re-establishment in that very land whence they were driven; and their true conversion with all their heart and all their soul to God. At present, the two latter of these promises are in abeyance, for causes which my reverend brethren, who follow me, will lay before you. The immediate state of Jehovah's dealing with Israel, in connexion with the glorious past and the still more glorious future, may be likened

to a rich vein of ore in a mine. Much has been gathered from it in times gone by ; but some mighty convulsion of nature has dislocated the vein ; so that now the labourer can only discover a few straggling and interrupted threads of gold. But ere long the fault and interruption will be passed through ; the vein of gold will be found again, in quality much more pure, in measure vastly increased. If the past produce was precious, what shall be the future possession ? There is at this present time a remnant, according to the election of grace, to connect the experience of mercies past, with the hope and assurance of mercies yet to come, unto God's own people. The central fire, as it were, of God's Righteousness, Wisdom, and Judgment, which produces this awful dislocation, just threw that portion of the ore on which it struck into another portion of the field, when by the fall salvation came to the Gentiles ; but ere long, as we deem, the unerringly wise deviation will be set right, and the consequences will be unspeakably blessed, both to Jew and Gentile. "For if the fall of the Jews be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness ? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead ?" The leading features of the promises, in their highest meaning, are spiritual,—

justification by faith in the promised Word ; the imputation of faith for righteousness, as to Abraham, so to all them who walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham,—and all the blessings centred in the promised seed are equally and essentially the objects of faith to ourselves as to them. The promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, and its righteousness, which is utterly unattainable by fallen man ; but through the righteousness of faith. And why ? “ It is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be made sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.” It is of faith, and made to the righteousness of faith, in order that the recovery of the world should be in harmony with the first promise of redemption and restoration to the world’s fallen and ruined tenant. “ Rejoice then, ye Gentiles, with his people. The promise is sure to God’s ancient heritage and to you. He is not a man that He should lie ; nor the son of man, that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it ? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good ?”

2. These blessings are assured to Abraham, his seed, and all nations of the earth, by the *cove-*

nant of God. The promise of a country, a posterity, a Saviour, had been repeatedly given to the friend of God; but these reiterated declarations, although proceeding from the God of truth, might possibly allow his heart to relax its hold of simple dependence, and to fall into doubt, and into that grave of comfort which doubt opens to the mind. He is therefore commanded to make a sacrifice, and God enters into and establishes a covenant with him and with his seed for ever. Into the peculiar mode and most impressive solemnities wherewith that covenant was established, I must not presume to enter. It must suffice to name its high and momentous import. “I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give to thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger; all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” Here is not only a gratuitous promise, but a solemn contract; one whereon the Most High espoused himself to Abraham, and to the Church in him; one wherein he gave the land not only as a present dwelling, but as the type of an eternal abode; a land of rest and blessedness in a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God, an everlasting

possession. The perpetuity of this covenant, in connection with the faithfulness of God, rests upon its absolute graciousness. It is a covenant of mercy, free and unconditional, to guilty and helpless man ; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. In it the Mediator Himself, the life to be obtained by Him, the faith whereby men are made partakers of Him, and of the benefits of His death—in a word, the whole salvation, with all its requisites, are freely promised. It was irrespective and independent of the Sinaitic covenant and law of Moses. “The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” It was to be a blessing to the faithful, when the ceremonial law should be published, and the moral law fortified with new sanctions. It was to bless them amidst all the type, shadow, and impressive ritual of the Levitical dispensation. It was to bless the believer, when Abraham’s promised Seed should come through all ages of salvation ; and it was to be, in the mighty consummation of its purposes, eternal as the being of God, and the bliss of his glorified children.

As established with Abraham and his seed in their generations for an everlasting covenant, its just and literal meaning implied that Abraham’s

ral seed were to remain a distinct people in successive generations, without being de-
yed. "When they be in the land of their
nies, I will not cast them away; neither will I
or them to destroy them utterly, and to break
covenant with them." "Fear not, O Jacob
servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee;
I will make an end of all nations whither I
: driven thee; but I will not make a full end of
." Israel therefore may now be as a wife whom
husband has for a time divorced for her great
guilty infidelities, despoiled of her dignity,
cast forth from her husband's house. But
covenant is for ever. In these sad circum-
ces the great Bridegroom turns his eyes to
— to that ancient and miserable people,
se are the Father's, and of whom as con-
ing the flesh, Christ came, who is over
God blessed for ever. His gifts and callings
without repentance. His banished ones shall
return to Immanuel's land. They may now
andering in darkness, sorrow, and alienation;
a day of brighter things awaits them in their
oration and conversion. "I will betroth thee
me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me
ighteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-
ness, and in mercies. I will even betroth
unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know
Lord. I will be their God;" the object of

their worship, the centre of their love, the exhaustless well-spring of their mercies; their covenant and unchangeable God. "Thy Maker, O Israel, is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." Hath God then cast away his people whom He foreknew? "God forbid!" Zion may say, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, but I will not forget thee. For this is as the waters of Noah before me. For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth unto thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee." In this covenant for the restoration and conversion of the national Israel of God, all Israel shall be saved; and in the train of their salvation will come, re-

joicing and triumphing, the whole Church of God.

3. Once more. The blessings described are secured to Abraham, to his natural and national posterity, and to all families of the earth, by the *oath of God*. “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, (or bless themselves) because thou hast obeyed my voice.” All the promises are here collected in one focus of divine light and mercy. All had been confirmed by a covenant—all were now to have the tremendous ratification of an oath, made by the Most High in the stupendous condescension of his love. Because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself. And herein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath ; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. The immutability of God’s counsel is the foundation of our faith. Until this

high attribute of his nature be manifest, our faith can by no possibility be sure and steadfast. Who would not, however, think God's declaration, confirmed by his covenant of promise, entirely sufficient as a rock of ages to our faith? and yet He who knew that Jew and Gentile would stand in need of more, hath given more. But on this subject I have no time, no strength, no ability to expatiate. I retreat from the brightness which shrouds this condescension in mystery so profound, adoring what I cannot comprehend; and crying, "Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and goodness of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." Lord, increase our faith.

My dear hearers, however imperfectly I may have touched upon and treated that high theme, (and of that imperfection I am deeply conscious); however far and fainting behind its track of glory may have left me, as I tried to follow it with a halting foot and ill-enlightened mind; yet are the Scriptures themselves a beaming record of light and truth concerning it to us all. They tell and testify that the unchangeable God has bound up the restoration and conversion of his own Israel with the spiritual life and conversion of the Gentiles, as the staves, Beauty and Bands, were bound together in the Prophet's vision. They are inseparable.

Do you then pray, in daily supplication, “Thy kingdom come?” Well, that kingdom cannot come in the full glory and universality of its dominion, until God’s banished ones shall return to their land, acknowledge their Messiah, and in Him adore and serve their God. Connect then the ancient heritage of God with his Gentile flock in your fervent supplications; and wrestle with Him who fills the throne of grace for the coming of that time when there shall be one fold under one Shepherd—Christ Jesus the Lord. Then, and not till then, will be heard the emphatic cry of praise and adoration from the ransomed Church, “Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!”

THE FURTHER
UNFOLDING OF THE PROMISE,
BY
NATHAN'S MESSAGE TO DAVID
CONCERNING HIS SON.

*Ἐγὼ δὲ κατεστάθην βασιλεὺς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ Σιών
ὅρος τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ.* (PSAL. ii. 6.)

“In mercy shall the throne be established; and He shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.” (Is. xvi. 5.)

LECTURE V.

THE FURTHER UNFOLDING OF THE ORIGINAL
PROMISE BY THE PROPHET NATHAN'S MES-
SAGE TO DAVID CONCERNING HIS SON, TAKEN
IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROPHETIC PSALMS.

BY THE REV. FIELDING OULD, M.A.,
INCUMBENT OF CHRIST CHURCH.

2 SAM. vii. 18, 19.

“ Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord ; and he said, Who am I, O Lord God ? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto ? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God ; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant’s house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God ? ”

THE subject which has been assigned to me in this course of Lectures is probably the most interesting, if it be not the most difficult, as compared with those which have preceded, to treat judiciously. That subject is, “ The further unfolding of the original Promise (viz. of full restoration by the seed of the woman) by the Prophet Nathan’s message to

David concerning his son, taken in connection with the Prophetic Psalms.” May the Lord graciously assist us, by the accompanying energy of his Holy Spirit, in a profitable meditation upon the wide field of Scriptural inquiry on which we are about to enter ; and grant that it may issue in the further promotion of His glory, and our own increased acquaintance with the deep things of God !

Without further preface, I proceed to remark, that it seems hardly possible for any one to read the historical portions of the Old Testament, without perceiving, that some at least of the persons who are the subjects of its narrative, are *typical characters*, introduced not so much for their own sakes, as to direct the attention of the church to events yet future. They seem exhibited in the mirror of the old revelation as a sort of living, embodied prophecy ; as characters in whom we are permitted to discern the faint but not obscure outline of another and far different personage. Of this class we were doubtless intended to regard the instructive prediction respecting the SON OF DAVID, the peaceable successor of the fruit of his warrior parent’s victories. Of him we can surely say, with the strongest and most conclusive assurance, that “a greater than Solomon is here.”

All who are familiar with the New Testament

are aware, that the Apostle Paul expressly applies the prophecy before us to the Lord Jesus Christ; and, in his application, comments upon it in such a way as to afford us a key to the interpretation of all *similar* passages. When asserting, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, the divine and consequently the super-angelic nature of the Son of God, he says, in direct reference to the 14th verse of the chapter before us, “Unto which of the angels said he at any time. . . . I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?”* From this authorised use of the prediction we not only learn that in *Solomon* we have a type of the Lord Jesus Christ; but further, that this was the admitted principle of interpretation amongst the Jews in the days of the Apostle. The Epistle to the Hebrews, we may remark, is highly argumentative and controversial. It is not *probable*, therefore—I had almost said *possible*—that the Apostle would have introduced a matter of doubtful disputation in order to remove a doubt. Had the Jews not then generally admitted the application of such passages to the then expected Messiah, it is not *likely*, to say the least, that the Apostle would have employed the argument in question.

Hence, then, we are furnished with an inspired

* 2 Sam. vii. 14, with Heb i. 5.

key for the wide unfolding of those varied predictions respecting the house of David, which display the history and fortunes of this world “for a great while to come.” Upon this inspired principle I propose to examine the statement contained in our text, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was *yet a small thing* in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant’s house *for a great while to come*. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?”

The Lord God had done great things for David; and yet all, it seems, was trifling in comparison of what he here solemnly promises to accomplish in his behalf. It was surely something to have been exalted from a lowly sheepfold to a glorious throne: instead of the shepherd’s crook, to be invested with a regal sceptre; to be lifted from companionship with “the few sheep in the wilderness,” into that condition of dignity, that all the neighbouring kings were his subjects or his tributaries. But even all this was, in his sight, “a small thing,” yea, as nothing in comparison of the stupendous exaltation promised to *his Son*. But however transcendant the grandeur of Solomon might be; however surpassing when beheld “in all his glory;” yet would it not admit of being thus compared with that of David. It could not be strictly affirmed,

that the state of Solomon was as much exalted above that of David, as was the condition of David in his *royalty* above that of David the humble *shepherd* of Bethlehem. And so David appears to have understood the matter himself: for he adds, ‘Is this the manner (the *law*) of *man*, O Lord God?’ As if he had said, “Surely a greater than *man* is here, O Lord God; even that blessed King, who is both God and man, the true Solomon, the Prince of Peace.”

Having thus cleared the way for a thorough investigation of this remarkable prophecy, I proceed to consider what the Lord had spoken of his servant’s *house* and *throne*—

I. IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE LITERAL SOLOMON.

II. IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL.

III. IN ITS CONNECTION WITH THE PROPHETIC PSALMS.

IV. IN ITS RELATION TO THE FULL RESTORATION OF THE LOST DOMINION ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE.

I. IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE LITERAL SOLOMON.

The utmost brevity will suffice on this portion of our subject. It was promised to the literal Son of David,—

1. *That he should succeed his father on the throne*

of Israel. “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up *thy seed after thee*, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.”* We have only to refer to the first chapter of the First Book of Kings, for the fulfilment of this prediction.† And here it is worthy of remark, that Solomon was called to the throne *before* the death of his father. For, in point of fact, both *the father* and *the son* were designed to be types of Christ: *David* as the victorious warrior, and *Solomon* as the Prince of Peace. In one remarkable passage, Christ is exhibited as Solomon before the war was over.‡

2. *That he should build the temple of the Lord.* “He thall build an house for my name.”§ The history of the accomplishment of this part of the prophecy is recorded in full detail in the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of the First Book of Kings, to which it is unnecessary to make further reference.

3. *That he should be severely chastened for his sins, yet die a king.* “If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.”|| The melancholy record of Solomon’s apostacy into carnal sensuality and spiritual idolatry, is contained in

* 2 Sam. vii. 12.

† 1 Kings i. 33—35.

‡ Isaiah ix. 6.

§ 2 Sam. vii. 15.

|| 2 Sam. vii. 14.

the beginning of the eleventh chapter of the First Book of Kings ; where we also read, that “ The Lord was *angry* with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.”* The sentence of his punishment follows, accompanied with a merciful reserve, in consideration of the promise to his father. “ Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it; for David thy father’s sake : but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.”† The chapter concludes with a brief account of his death as *king*, and the undisputed succession of his son Rehoboam.

4. *That he should die in the mercy and favour of God.* “ But my mercy shall not depart away from him.”‡ Or, as it is more fully expressed in the eighty-ninth Psalm, “ Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that

* 1 Kings xi. 9. † 1 Kings xi. 11, 12. ‡ 2 Sam. vii 15.

I will not lie unto David.”* The principal evidence we have of the final repentance and conversion of Solomon is derived from the Book of Ecclesiastes, which he composed at an advanced period of his life, and which breathes in every chapter the experience of an humbled, broken-hearted, contrite, and enlightened child of God.

Let us now proceed to consider the prophecy—

II. IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL.

1. *His Throne.*—It will be admitted that *perpetuity* was promised to the house and throne of David :† “And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it *for ever*, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified *for ever*, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy

* Psalm lxxxix. 33—35. † 2 Sam. vii. 26—29.

servant: therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, *that it may continue for ever before thee*: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant *be blessed for ever.*”—Promises were made concerning both the *house* and the *throne*. “It is no fulfilment for *the house* to continue, and *the throne* to be cast down: for so it had been with Saul, *his house* was not exterminated, but *the kingdom* passed from him. And the perpetuity of David’s *house* in Christ, the son of David, is no accomplishment of what had been spoken. It is the *house* to which the promises are made, and that which the promise contains is the perpetuity of *the throne* in the hands of *the house*, and *the house* as the holder of *the throne*.

But this throne, on account of the sin and failure of the house of David, has been *long ago cast down*. In the eighty-ninth Psalm we have a reiterated statement of the same promises concerning the perpetuity of David’s house and throne, with the additional confirmation of the oath of God.* But it has been said that these promises are to be understood as *spiritually* and not *literally* applicable to Christ; that the throne of David means that on which Christ is now sitting in heaven.

* Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4, 29, 34—37.

But how would this accord with what follows in the Psalm : “ But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant : *thou hast profaned his crown, by casting it to the ground.* Thou hast broken down all his hedges ; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him : he is a reproach to his neighbours. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries ; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. Thou hast made his glory to cease, and *cast his throne down to the ground.*” *—To what can this apply ? Is it spoken of that throne of God on which Christ is now sitting ? Surely not : when or how was that throne cast down to the ground ? The very asking of such a question seems to involve a contradiction ; and yet to this incongruity of statement should we be brought, were we to apply the glory of the throne of David to that on which Christ is now seated. These things are spoken of the same throne ; and the verses which speak of the *desolation*, are an expostulation to God respecting the apparent non-fulfilment of the previously mentioned promises.

* Psalm lxxxix. 38—44.

Let us further observe, that during the period of this desolation, the Messiah is to be *an object of the adversaries' reproach*. The latter part of the Psalm is an expostulation with the Lord respecting the fulfilment of the promises before recited: "LORD, where are thy former loving kindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth? Remember, LORD, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people; wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached *the footsteps of thine anointed.*"* — "*The heels of thy Messiah.*"† These last words are remarkable, for they seem definitively to connect that portion of the Psalm in which they occur with the present time, during which Christ

* Ps. lxxxix. 49—51.

† I am aware that some commentators on the Psalms have taken a different view of this passage.—Thus Bishop Horne: "The last argument urged by the church, in her expostulation with God for a speedy redemption, is the continual reproach to which she was subject, on account of the promise being delayed. The 'mighty people,' or heathen nations blasphemed the God who was said to have made such promises, and reproached the footsteps, or mocked at *the tardy advent* of his Messiah: 'Exprobaverunt vestigia Christi tui: tarditatem vestigiorum Christi tui.' Chald. (*Horne's Commentary*, pp. 381, 382.) I would not therefore attach an undue importance to the argument drawn from the rendering adopted in the text; it is however remarkable, that the root of the Hebrew word used עֲקֵב (gnakebb) is literally 'heel,' and is so translated in several Psalms.—See Ps. xli. 9; Ps. xlix. 5."

shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”* Yes, it is for the Messiah that the throne of David is waiting! How gloriously does Isaiah sing of the birth of Him who is to occupy its vacancy. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, *upon the throne of David*, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the **LORD** of hosts will perform this.”† And how does the angel Gabriel, when addressing the virgin concerning the birth of the Lord, re-echo the sounds of the prophetic lyre of the son of Amoz, when he says, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne of his father David*. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”‡

2. *His people.*—They are called “Israel” in the

* Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

† Is. ix. 6, 7.

‡ Luke i. 32, 33.

10th verse of the chapter before us : “ Moreover I will appoint a place for my people *Israel*,” &c.

Let us endeavour to ascertain, from other portions of Scripture, of what *Israel* the prediction speaks. Are we to understand by the term *Israel after the flesh*; or, according to the interpretation of some, *the Gentile Church*? We will appeal to an inspired commentary to determine : “ The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. . . . My Spirit that is upon thee . . . shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”* This is one of a large class of similar predictions, which speak of the restoration of Israel, and of the return and residence of our Lord Jesus Christ with his people. Now there are found not a few warmly to contend that “ Zion ” and “ Jacob ” are here *figurative* phrases, and that the return of the Redeemer is merely the manifestation of his grace in the heart. We have, however, the authority of the Apostle Paul for taking a very different view of the matter. “ All *Israel* shall be saved, *as it is written*, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”† Is not “ Israel ” here the *literal* Israel ?

* Is. lix. 20, 21. lx. 1.

† Rom. ii. 26.

Then is, consequently, her *Jerusalem* the *literal* Jerusalem, and her *throne* David's throne, re-established in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. If Israel be restored, there cannot consistently be any other interpretation. But further, in the passage already quoted, we have the announcement, "Thy light is come." What light? Let us turn for an answer once more to the inspired commentary. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a *great light*: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."* Now, so far as this remarkable prophecy has received its accomplishment, how has it been fulfilled? By the *personal descent* of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven to earth, and his continued residence among his people Israel in Galilee. Have we not here another key to unlock the treasures of unfulfilled prophecy? If the primary and partial fulfilment of this prophecy is to be found in the *personal appearing* of the Lord among his people Israel, may we not look forward to its complete and plenary accomplishment in that still future but not far distant day, when, having returned to Zion, he shall arise as "the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings;"† when his "feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives;"‡

* Is. ix. 2.

† Mal. iv. 2.

‡ Zech. xiv. 4.

when “the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, and the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients, gloriously.”*

What is the *present state* of the future subjects of the Lord Jesus? St. Paul thus describes their *moral state*: “Israel hath not attained unto the law of righteousness, because they sought it not by faith.”† Hosea thus describes their *outward state*: “The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.”‡ And how does he describe their *future state*? “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and *David* their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.”§ Surely this latter *promise* must be taken as *literally* as the foregoing *threat*. Whom then are we to understand by “David their king.” Not the actual David, long since dead; but the Messiah, of whom “the beloved” was an eminent type, and whose name is frequently applied to Christ in the prophecies.||

“The great cardinal facts of prophecy,” says an

* Is. xx iv. 23. † Rom. ix. 31, 32. ‡ Hos. iii. 4.
§ Hos. iii. 5. || See Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24.

ingenious writer,* “are revealed in three ways.
 1. In simple language. 2. In symbolical language.
 3. In figurative language.—In each of these three ways is the restoration of Jerusalem and the reign of the Lord set forth. *In simple language*: “Jerusalem shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s wine-presses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”† And immediately before this we have the announcement, “The Lord shall be king over all *the earth*: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.”‡ The same is revealed in Ezekiel *symbolically*, in the vision of the dry bones, which is thus explained by the Lord himself: “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD,

* “Prophecies respecting the Jews and Jerusalem, in the form of a Catechism.”—Plymouth.

† Zech. xiv. 10, 11. ‡ Ib. 9.

when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves. And shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live; and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.”* The same is revealed in Isaiah *figuratively*: “Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of the neck, O captive daughter of Zion.”†

One literal fact is conveyed in each of these three predictions; just as the coming of the Lord is described in *simple language* in Isaiah xxvi. 21; in *symbolical*, Rev. xix. 11; and *figuratively*, Isaiah lxiii. Even if we were to give up the *symbolic* and *figurative* altogether, the *simple* alone would be sufficient to establish the fact; and surely we should tremble to reject it, lest we reject the testimony of the Holy Ghost.”

3. *His reign*.—As it has been proved that the *throne* is a *literal* throne, and the *people* a *literal* people, even Israel; so it follows that the *reign* will be a *literal* and *personal* reign.

* Ezek. xxxvii. 11—14.

† Isaiah lii. 1, 2.

When will this reign commence?—There is a general agreement that the blessed Jesus will come in person to judge the world. It is also admitted on all hands that there will be at some period a general prevalence of millennial blessedness. The difference of opinion respects the question as to whether the Saviour's coming will *precede* or *follow* this season of universal blessing. Let us refer to the Scriptures for information upon this point. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with *the trump* of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* Here we are apprized of the Lord's personal descent to the earth, accompanied by the subjects of the first resurrection, and heralded by the trumpet voice of the archangel. In another Epistle of the same Apostle we have the same announcement, with the

* 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. In our Lord's answer to Martha (John xi. 25, 26, he seems to announce, in terms equally expressive, the doctrine of the first resurrection. "I am the resurrection and the life; *he that believeth in me*, though he were dead, *yet shall he live*; and whosoever *liveth and believeth in me shall never die*;" alluding, in the latter clause, to those who shall be "alive and remain."

ditional intelligence that this trumpet is to be *the last trumpet* :” “ In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump.*”* Now the *last trumpet* implies a *series* of trumpets; and according to the inspired rule of “ comparing spiritual things with spiritual,” we must seek for such a series. And turning to the eighth chapter of the Apocalypse, we find seven trumpets spoken of:† while of the seventh or last this remarkable language is used : ‘ In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he *shall begin* to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”‡ The winding up of the prophetic mystery, the removal of the veil which obscures, if not hides, the purposes of God from the eyes of man, shall then take place. Now if the mystery of God be then finished, it follows that this must be “ the last trumpet ” of the Apostle Paul. And what have we in the next chapter? Why the stirring announcement, that “ When the seventh angel sounded, there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”§ Thus have we, by faith, accompanied the Lord Jesus from *the right hand* of the Father to

* 1 Cor. xv. 52. † Rev. viii. 2. ‡ Rev. x. 7. § Rev. xi. 15.

the *revisited earth*, from the scene of his *intercession* to the theatre of his *triumph*; and have seen this kingdom established and his reign commencing *previous and introductory* to the period of millennial blessedness.

Take another similar instance. Speaking of the resurrection, St. Paul says again, that “When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying *that is written*, Death is swallowed up in victory.”* Where is this saying written? “And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. *He will swallow up death in victory*; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.”† And how does the very next chapter open? “In *that day* shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city: salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. *Open ye the gates, that the*

* 1 Cor. xv. 54.

† Isaiah xxv. 6—8.

righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.”*

Once more: “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.”† And what immediately follows? “O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thy iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.”‡

What a glorious prospect is here for God’s ancient people Israel, of whom an eloquent writer has recently remarked, that “they are the aristocracy of Scripture, reft of their coronets, princes in degradation.” And that, notwithstanding they

* Isaiah xxvi. 1—4. † Hosea xiii. 14. ‡ Hosea xiv. 1—4.

are distinguished in this the closing period of their national apostacy by "a meanness the most abject, and by the degradation of helots," they are nevertheless enabled to "look back along many thousand years to an ancestry, beside which that of our peers and princes is but of yesterday; regarding justly Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, as their great progenitors; and pressing forward, on the wings of faith, and hope, and promise, to a long expected day, when they, now kings and princes in disguise, shall become so indeed by a manifestation the most glorious, and in a dispensation the most sublime! A people who are a perpetual miracle, a living echo of heaven's holy tones prolonged from generation to generation!"*

By what blessings to the Jewish people shall this reign be distinguished?—Before entering upon this I would remark, that the New Testament application of *fulfilled* prophecy furnishes us with certain principles which are most valuable in their application to that which is still *unfulfilled*. The greater part of the fulfilled predictions, respecting our blessed Lord, form only a portion of an extended prophecy, applicable and extending to times yet future. We have a very striking instance of this in the prophet Isaiah, in a passage beautifully descriptive of the blessings of Messiah's

* See an interesting article in Fraser's Magazine for September 1840, on "The present state and prospects of the Jews."

reign. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”* This passage we know the Saviour applied to himself on his first appearing, in what we may call his inauguration sermon in the synagogue of Nazareth.† But we have already seen that the Apostle Paul interprets “the Zion” of this prophecy of the *literal* Jerusalem.‡ When, therefore, it shall have received its *plenary* accomplishment, by an advent as literal as that which gave to it a *partial* and *primary* one, what shall be the blessings with which he shall crown restored Jerusalem? “The mourners in Zion” shall be comforted, their “ashes” superseded by “beauty,” and their “mourning” by “the oil of joy;” while, instead of “the spirit of heaviness,” the naked shoulder of the prodigal but repentant Israel shall be covered with “the garment of praise.”§ The “old wastes” of Judah and Israel shall be “repaired,” while the gates of the glorified Jerusalem shall be entered by her emancipated sons.|| Their “flocks” shall be fed by the pas-

* Isaiah lxi. 1.

† Luke iv. 17—19.

‡ Isaiah lix. 20; with Rom. xi. 26.

§ Isaiah lxi. 3.

|| Isaiah lxi. 4; lxii. 1, 10. Compare Ezek. xxxviii. 8, and Psalm xxiv. 7—10.

toral care of the “*stranger*,” while “the sons of the *alien*” (both common terms of reproach for the Gentiles, see Eph. ii. 12) shall be their “plowmen” and their “vine-dressers.”* And the glorious designation of the regenerate men of Zion shall be “priests of the Lord,” and their blessed function to the once despised but then earnestly longed for Gentiles, the “ministers of their God.”†

A little further on we have another remarkable prophecy strongly confirming the view already given. “Behold the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.”‡ It is evident that a *person* and not a *state* is here intended; as if it were written, “Thy *Saviour* cometh,” &c.: for he is spoken of personally, *his* reward, and *his* work. Does this prophecy speak of blessings *already* bestowed, or of a promise *yet* to be fulfilled? The Saviour has not left us at a loss for an answer to this inquiry; for we find him referring to this prophecy in the very last chapter of his revelation, and declaring its relation to times not yet arrived. “And, behold, I come quickly, and *my reward is with me*, to give every man ac-

* Isaiah lxi. 5.

† Ib. lxi. 6.

‡ Ib. lxii. 11.

ording as his work shall be.”* And precisely similar is that encouraging prediction of Zechariah, ‘ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O laughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh into thee ; he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”† This prophecy was expressly applied by the Evangelists to the first personal advent of our Lord :‡ but can we suppose it has received its *complete* fulfilment, and does not point to the day when Jesus shall come again the second time to invest the chosen nation with the blessings of his reign ? Certainly not : for Zion was not then made as “ the sword of a mighty man,” nor did the Lord then “ defend ” the Jewish people, “ the Lord seen over them, and his arrows going forth as lightning ;” nor were they permitted “ with sling-stones to subdue and devour.” Neither did “ the Lord their God save them in that day as the flock of his people,” making them “ as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.”§

But the time would fail to tell of all the revealed blessings of that glorious reign, even as they are set forth in that “ Psalm for Solomon,” which David is said to have composed in his old age, as if he would have comforted himself in his dying

* Rev. xxii. 12.

† Zech. ix. 9.

‡ John xii. 14, 15.

§ Zech. ix. 13—16.

moments with the prospect of the glories of the kingdom of his Son and his Lord. We may just briefly remark, that the government which he was to establish was to be a *righteous* government;* one which should produce an abundance of *peace*;† in which the *poor* and the *needy* should enjoy a special protection;‡ the proud *oppressors* reckoned with and broken;§ pure and undefiled *religion* shall flourish and abide,|| the *spirit* be poured out in rich abundance from on high,¶ and one which shall be *universally extended* over all the families of man.** That it was to be a government whose king should be *honoured and beloved* by all his subjects;†† under which there should be a miraculous *increase* both of the fruits of the earth in the country and of the people inhabiting the cities;‡‡ and which should be *perpetual*, nay *everlasting*, both to his own glory, and the happiness of all obedient to his rule, and acknowledging his dominion.§§ Well may penitent Israel exclaim, in anticipation or in enjoyment of its blessings, “Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let *the whole earth* be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen.”|||

* Psalm lxxii. 2.

† Ib. 2, 7.

‡ Ib. 2, 4, 12, 13.

§ Ib. 4.

|| Ib. 5—7.

¶ Ib. 6.

** Ib. 8, 9, 10.

†† Ib. 15.

‡‡ Ib. 16.

§§ Ib. 5, 7, 17.

||| Ib. 18, 19.

But we proceed to consider the prophecy before us more particularly.

III. IN ITS CONNECTION WITH THE PROPHETIC PSALMS.

These Psalms are so interwoven with the points we have already had under consideration, as they are with that which is still to engage our attention, viz. the restoration of the forfeited dominion, that it will not be necessary for me to dwell on them at any considerable length under this particular head.

We have already seen that the “Zion” of the *prophetic* Scriptures is the literal Zion of the *historical*. Let me then refer you,

1. *To one particular Psalm*, in which the application of this principle is both striking and instructive. In the seventy-ninth Psalm, afflicted and suffering Israel is presented to us in darksome weeds of widowhood, mourning over her desolations and bereavements thus: “O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. They have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee. Deliver us and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake.”*

* Psalm. lxxix. 1, 7, 11, 9.

Here then is the literal Jerusalem before our eyes, in sorrow but not in despair, “persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed;” supplicating a restoration to the favour of her Redeemer, and a deliverance from the sins which had severed her from his love. And does she seek in vain? No; behold the answer to her prayer: “Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. So *the heathen* shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, *He shall appear* in his glory.”* How exactly parallel is this with the language of the Apostle, “All Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”† “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be” (to the world) “but life from the dead?”‡ It therefore follows, that if the chastised and suffering, if the repentant, supplicating, believing, hoping Jerusalem be *the literal one*, assuredly the restored, built up, comforted, and glorified Jerusalem shall be *the literal Zion* which the Lord loves, and whose king’s house and throne God has promised, covenanted, and sworn to establish for ever.

* Psalm cii. 13—16.

† Rom. xi. 26.

‡ Ib. 15.

2. *To a certain class* of Prophetic Psalms, in which the history of Judah and her temple, her people and her Saviour, are strikingly and instructively set forth.—This class consists of four Psalms, connected together by the same title “Shushan,” or, as it is in the plural, “Shoshannim,” a word whose *ideal*, if not *literal*, signification is said to be “the changed ones.”* The people of God are indeed his *changed ones*: they were changed by his *grace* in time, and they shall be changed in eternity by “the glory of his *power*.” Death itself is to them but the gate of a blessed change, introducing to the beatitude of a glorious resurrection. Such also, as we shall see, is the history of Jerusalem.

(1.) The first of these Psalms to which I would direct attention is the 69th, in which we have set forth emphatically *the suffering Saviour*. It is entitled, “To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim.”†

* It is on this account, most probably, that the LXX render “upon Shoshannim,” by *ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀλλοιωθησομένων*, “concerning those who are to be changed.” See Septuagint, Psalm xliv. title. There is, however, a great variety of opinion among commentators as to the precise meaning of this term. See Hammond and Horsley *in loco*.

† According to two ancient Greek translators, this title should be rendered, “To him that giveth victory concerning those that are to be changed.” It is thus regarded as a psalm of thanksgiving to that gracious Saviour, who has not only in his own person overcome the world, but who enables every one of his chosen people to exclaim, “Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. xv. 57.)

Addressed specifically to the “changed ones” of the Lord, it reminds us of the great *foundation* of our change, as well as of the future *restoration* of that Israel who shall one day be built upon that foundation. Hear how the suffering Saviour cries—the antitypical Joseph out of the horrible pit into which his unnatural brethren have cast him: “Save me, O God; for the waters are come into my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.”* “Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”† There is no mistaking the tones of this voice; there is no doubt that it has been inspired with this melancholy utterance by the agony of the *garden* and the horrors of the *tree*. But who is it that imprecates that tremendous malediction upon the same Israel that has thus been suffered for? “Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let

* Psalm lxix. 1—3. † Ib. 20, 21.

their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.”* It is the same just and righteous, yet true and faithful Lord. And is this curse breathed forth against the *literal Israel*? So St. Paul informs us: “And David saith, Let their table be made a snare and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.”† There is no question but that the Apostle is here speaking of the literal Israel. Yes! the curse of temporary banishment from the favour of God is here pronounced by the voice of him who rejoices in this very Psalm in the prospect of her perfect and abiding restoration: “Let the heaven and earth praise Him, the seas, and everything that moveth therein: for God will save Sion, and will build the cities of Judah; that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it; and they that love his name shall dwell therein.”‡ Here, then, we see the suffering Saviour looking forward to the fruit of his work; the travail of his

* Psalm lxi. 22—25. † Rom. xi. 9, 10. ‡ Psalm lxi. 34—36

soul, which was “the soul of travail;” and regarding, as a part of “the joy that was set before him,” the restoration to the God of Israel, of the Israel of God!

(2.) In the next of these instructive Psalms, the 60th, addressed to “the Chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth,” we are presented with an affecting picture of *the suffering Church*.—This is surely the heart-broken language of God’s people, suffering because of their transgressions: “O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again. Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh. Thou hast shewed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink of the wine of astonishment.”* But see how they are sustained in their sufferings with the present confidence of peace and reconciliation. “Thou hast given a banner to them that *fear* thee;” with this banner they are enabled to confront all their enemies: “that it may be displayed because of the truth.”† And when it is thus unfurled, and waving in the four winds of heaven, they, *the elect* people of God, are enabled further to look forward to their perfect restoration through Jesus. “That thy beloved may be delivered, save with thy right hand, and

* Ps. lx. 1—3.

† Ib. 4.

hear Me.”* Who is this that says, “Hear *me*,” or more literally, “Answer me?” Who but the blessed Redeemer, who here advocates their cause: they are presented as in a listening attitude, after hoisting their banner; while He, their brother in the flesh, speaks from his right-hand station, and says, “Hear *Me*!” It is no wonder, then, that after this exercise of faith in suffering, looking *upward* to the faithful Saviour, and *forward* to the promised victory, they strengthen themselves more confidently in the assurances of Jehovah: “God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.”† Their God hath spoken, and then all follows that the heart of the church could desire; “Gilead is *mine*, and Manasseh is *mine*, Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.”‡

(3.) We now turn to the third of these Psalms, concerning “the changed ones,” the 80th, where we are presented with the picture of *desolated Israel*, looking up at length, in fervent prayer, to her long despised Saviour, and supplicating for his return. It is late, but blessed be God it is not too late, for her to say, “Let thy hand be upon

* Ps. lx. 5. † Ib. 6. ‡ Ib. 7, 8; also see Ps. cviii. 6—13.

the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of Man, whom thou madest strong for thyself.”* And what is her prayer? Lamenting, in all the bitterness of a wounded spirit, the desolations “of the vine which he brought out of Egypt,” and fully persuaded that God “is able to graft them in again,” the burthen of her soul’s desire is, “*Return*, we beseech thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.”† What vine? If we turn to the prophet Isaiah, and read the parable of the “Vineyard of the well beloved,” for which so *much* was done that there was no room for *more*,‡ we shall be informed that “the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant.”§ The same that pours forth that sublime but touching entreaty, “O that thou wouldst *rend the heavens*, that thou wouldst *come down*, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence; as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil; to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence.”||

Nor does repentant Israel thus supplicate in vain; the next Psalm we have to examine supplies us with the answer.

* Ps lxxx. 17.

† Ib. 14.

‡ Is v. 4.

§ Ib. 7.

¶ Is. lxiv. 1, 2.

(4.) This is the 45th, which sets before us a *returned Saviour*, a redeemed people, a glorified Israel. There was a time when Israel, in unbelief, could see “no beauty in her Messiah that she should desire him :”* *now*, He is in her opened eyes “fairer than the children of men.”† There was a time when she refused to hear him, and rejected his labours of love as though he were a confederate with Belzebub : *now* she perceives that “grace is poured into his lips,”‡ *now*, in the language of another Psalm, she “will hear what God the Lord will speak ; for he will speak *peace* unto his people, and to his saints Surely his *salvation* is nigh them that fear him, that *glory* may dwell in our land.”§ She has been for centuries and ages the sport of the enemy and the prey of the spoiler ; *now* she looks forward to *subdued enemies*. “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness ; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies, whereby the people fall under thee.”|| This is her solemn prayer for his return in ven-

* Is. liii. 2.

† Ps xlv. 2.

‡ Ib.2.

§ Ps. lxxxv. 8, 9.

|| Ps. xlv. 3—5.

geance; and is but the counterpart of that terribly sublime description: "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon the white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."* She has "abode for many days," as we have seen, "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice:"† *now* she beholds in her *returned Saviour a King*: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre."‡ *A Priest*: "All thy garments smell of *myrrh*, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory

* Rev. xix. 14—18.

† Hos. iii. 4.

‡ Ps. xlv. 6.

palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*
A Prophet : “*Hearken*, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.”† She sees also the *glorified Church*, composed of God’s elect, from Jew and Gentile, under the Gospel dispensation : “Upon thy right hand did stand *the Queen* in gold of Ophir. The King’s daughter is all glorious *within*,” and *without* too, for “her clothing is of wrought gold.”‡ These are they who are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”§ And how is *she herself* described in this wonderful Psalm, the restored and converted Israel, the Jews of the blessed Millennium? “*The virgins*, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee; with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought:” and not as it was in the day when they were “foolish virgins,” and when, having the lamp of a good profession without the oil of saving truth, the door of the Bridegroom’s chamber “was *shut*”|| on their approach, they shall now, being made “*wise* unto salvation through the sight of

* Ps. xlv. 8.

† Ib. 10, 11.

‡ Ib. 9, 13.

§ Eph. ii. 19.

|| Matt. xxv. 10.

Christ Jesus," "enter into the King's palace."* *Then* shall be the Jubilee of the world! The "kings of the East" shall be "princes in all the earth!"† The voice of their Hallelujah shall reverberate far and wide over the restored creation! And a wondering universe shall hail this gracious "receiving of them, as life from the dead!"‡

Let us now proceed, in the last place, to consider the prophecy of our text:

IV. IN ITS RELATION TO THE FULL RESTORATION OF THE LOST DOMINION.

The purpose of God respecting his Son, the great restorer of all that man lost by the Fall, is thus very fully stated: "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created *by him* and *for him*: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."§ "Now, just as the espoused bride can look upon all the dominion of the monarch to whom she is affianced, as being that which concerns her *because of him*; so is it with regard to the church and her Lord. The bride would feel that her Lord was dishonoured, if she saw his dominions devastated

* Ps. xlv. 14, 15.

† Rom. xi. 15.

‡ Ps. xlv. 16.

§ Col. i. 16, 17.

by an enemy, and the subjects themselves in rebellion. But if she could by any means know that her Lord would interfere in power, in taking the whole into his own hand, then surely she would rejoice in the anticipation of that day. And the greater the present power of the enemy, the greater the evil and misrule, the more would it tell her of the *power* and *wisdom* of her Lord, in being about to reduce the whole into subjection, harmony, and order. Thus ought the church to read what the confusion throughout creation teaches concerning Him who will yet make it a dominion fully fitted for the display of his glory. The contrast teaches a lesson which could not otherwise have been learned.’*’

1. The *scene* and *subject* of this dominion.—It was the dominion of *the earth* which man lost; it is the dominion of *the earth* which shall be restored, when the throne of David shall be the centre of earthly blessing, the Gentiles being blessed through them, and we as being “with the Lord.” “It was in consequence of Adam’s sin, that the sentence was declared unto him, “Cursed is the ground *for thy sake*.”† Not only did Adam and his wife fall under the curse, not only did the serpent prevail against them; but *creation*,

* The Throne of David.

† Gen. iii. 17.

at whose head man had been placed, fell under the same thralldom. Now the parties were these: the *man*, the *woman*, and the *serpent*; and the scene was *creation*. Just so in that which is yet to be manifested. There is to be the *second Adam*, the *church his bride*, and *the devil* that old serpent. In the one case there was creation *brought under* the power of Satan; in the other, it is *rescued* from his grasp. But it is not until the Lord comes that Satan is bound. *Then* will the ancient prophecy of Eden, concerning the seed of the woman, be fulfilled, "It shall bruise thy head."

In Eden, it was *the woman* who was beguiled by the tempter: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."* Adam voluntarily transgressed, sharing her sin against God, and involving himself and his posterity in the condemnation and the curse. Just so, in resemblance and contrast, there are *Christ* and *the Church*. Christ was never beguiled, and He never transgressed; but the church, his betrothed bride from eternity, being found in transgression, He voluntarily gave Himself to take the church's condemnation, to bind it to Himself as if it were his own, and to receive the full out-pouring of wrath which she really deserv-

* 1 Tim. ii. 14.

ed. In *Adam* we have the husband taking the wife's place, and involving himself with her, and all *creation* with them, in helpless misery. In *Christ* we have the husband taking also the wife's guilt, though not in transgression, and in power taking her through his resurrection, right up into the place which of right belonged to him. In *Adam* we have Satan winning a victory over the works of God. In *Christ*, the works of God are to be taken away from Satan, and brought again, according to the purpose of God, under the dominion of *man*, the second Adam, who will reign with his bride: she manifesting the triumph of her Lord, while all his works declare His glory in redemption.

• How much should we lose of the scope of God's future dealings, were we to look at *the Church*, as being the *only* object for which the blood of Christ had been shed. In that case it would have seemed as though a part of the inheritance, even *this earth*, had been actually usurped by Satan, so as never to be again recovered to its rightful Lord. Never, surely, shall we have right views of the resurrection and triumph of our Lord, until the Spirit of God shall teach us to look forward to the actual binding of the great usurper, and the actual deliverance of creation from his power. "The earnest desire of the creation

waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”* But the sons of God will not be manifest, until their elder brother be himself manifested;† which will not take place until “the adoption, the redemption of the body.”‡ Thus, in the resulting blessing, are there *three* parties connected together, *Christ*, the *Church*, and *creation*. *Christ* has triumphed, but he is not yet manifested as the conqueror. He has not yet “taken to himself his great power and reigned.” The *Church* has the knowledge of redemption, but waits for “the adoption;” the *creation* is still under the curse, groaning in pain, waiting until, by the same great manifestation of glory, the withering curse shall be taken away, and she be ushered into “the glorious liberty of the children of God.”§

2. The *connection of the Jews* with the promised restoration of this dominion.—The restoration of the Jews is so connected in prophecy with the blessedness of the whole earth, that it is impossible to separate what God hath just joined together.

The period of coming glory, it would appear, is to be introduced by a brief but sore time of

* Rom. viii. 19. † See 1 John iii. passim. ‡ Rom. viii. 23.
§ Rom. viii. 21. See the Tract, entitled, “The Throne of David.”

trouble, rocking the kingdoms of the world and the foundations of society to their centre. This "shaking of the nations,"* will result in a season of blessed calm restored to the world by the Prince of Peace. A few instances in proof of this are all that our time and your patience will admit of.

Turn then, first, to that remarkable prophecy of Zechariah: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."† It is impossible for any one to spiritualize away this prediction, it is the chartered right of Zion and her sons. We have high authority for the conclusion that it is not *the graces of the Spirit* under the present Gentile dispensation, but His *effused energy* upon the literal Jerusalem, and that *at the second coming* of the Lord that is here foretold: "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and *they also which pierced him*."‡ What coming is this? The coming at the destruction of Jerusalem? Impossible; for the Apoca-

* Hag. ii. 6. Heb. xii. 26, 27. † Zech. xii. 10. ‡ Rev. i. 7.

• lypse was written after that event. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit, “the spirit of supplication” upon the Jews, then, is to be coeval with the yet future advent of the Lord. And the language of this supplication we are furnished with at great length in the prophetic Psalms, which may be almost regarded as an inspired Liturgy provided for the occasion.

Thus, in the 74th Psalm, Israel supplicates, “O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Sion, wherein thou hast dwelt. Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.”* Here we have Israel pleading with God, lamenting the desolation of the city and the sanctuary, and saying, “We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?”† And such supplications are not addressed to the throne of grace in vain: the same sweet liturgy has prepared for

* Ps. lxxiv. 1—3.

† Ibid. 9. 10.

Israel her song of rejoicing: "Lord, thou hast been favourable to thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin. Selah. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger."*

And when are these things to take place? Immediately subsequent to a gathering of all nations in formidable confederacy against Jerusalem, as you may perceive, on a reference to the 12th and 14th chapters of Zechariah. "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, *and the House of David shall be as God*, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."† It is "in that day," the day of these hitherto unaccomplished predictions, that the house of David shall receive from David's gracious Son "the spirit of grace and supplication."‡

* Ps. lxxv. 1—3.

† Zech. xii. 8, 9; xiv. 1—3. Is. lxiv. 1; lxii. 10—12; lxiii. 1—7.

‡ The prophetic student may also refer to Ps. xlviii. 4—7. In that hour of distress and dismay, "In Mount Zion is deliverance," Ps. xlviii. 1—3, 11—14; with Joel ii. 32, and iii. 1, 2, 17, &c.

The 9th Psalm, addressed to “the Chief-musician upon Muth-labben (concerning the death of the Son) is also exceedingly interesting in this view. It was probably written by David when he had slain Goliath ; the occasion reminding him of a greater David, who was to slay all the enemies of God’s Israel. Great was the dismay of assembled Israel, gathered under the unconverted Saul, until the appearance of the brave son of Jesse for their deliverance. Just so shall unconverted Israel be again gathered together, and again dismayed, until the all-conquering Son of David shall appear with all his saints, standing with his feet upon the Mount of Olives.* Although this Psalm is entitled “The death of the Son,” it contains only a few incidental allusions to his “*sufferings*,” but dwells rather with emphatic reiteration upon the “*glory* that shall follow.” “When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them ; he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.”† And then the prophetic lyre is swept to the succeeding happiness of restored Israel, and the dominion over *the earth* enjoyed by the Church, through her whom God has constituted the fountain from which the nations of the earth are to drink refreshment. “Thou hast rebuked the heathen,

* Zech. xix. 4, 5.

† Psalm ix. 12.

thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever. O thou enemy! destructions are come to a perpetual end; and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them. But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. . . . Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings. . . . That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation. . . . The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.”*

If the 9th Psalm, which speaks principally of the *result* of the son’s death, be entitled Muthlabben, the 22nd, which so affectingly describes his sufferings, is entitled, Aijeleth-Shahar, “concerning the hind† of the morning light.” After that detailed exhibition of the “man of sorrows,” with which we are all familiar, it fixes our attention mainly upon his sustaining *joy upon the cross*: “For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard him:”‡—*the restoration of Israel*: “Ye that

* Psalm ix. 5—7, 11, 14, 16. † Can ii. 9. ‡ Psalm xxii. 24.

fear the Lord, praise him ; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him ; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel : ” * —and the *consequent blessedness of the earth* : “ All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord ; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord’s ; and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship : all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him, and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him : it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.” † Thus we who live in the dispensation of the *suffering Saviour* are taught to look forward to his glory ; while they who live in the dispensation of *his glory* are taught to look back to his sufferings. ‡

To one other Psalm only will I refer, and that

* Psalm xxii. 23.

† Ib. 27—31.

‡ In Psalm xlvii., Israel is also represented as having the “ nations under her feet ; ” the “ princes of the people being gathered together,” and constituting the free willing offering spoken of in Psalm cx. 3 ; Can. vi. 12. And all this in connection with the resurrection, Psalm xlvii. 5 ; because it is to a risen Saviour that the penitent Israel is to look up. In the 68th Psalm, also, we have the Saviour’s ascension, Israel’s restoration and rebuilt temple ; followed, as usual, by the conversion of the heathen. Psalm lxviii. 13, 14, 17, 18, 26, 29, 31, 32.

because of the remarkable parallel which it presents with St. Paul's account of the Saviour's return. In the 50th Psalm we are told of the *coming of the Lord*: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence." So says Paul: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven."*—*Accompanied by fire*: "A fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him."† So says the Apostle: "In flaming fire taking vengeance."‡—*Assembling his saints from heaven and earth*: "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that he may judge his people. "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."§ And so the Apostle: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. . . . Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."||

In the 76th Psalm we have *Israel's* song of re-

* 2 Thess. i. 7.

† Psalm l. 3.

‡ 2 Thess. i.

§ Psalm l. 4, 5.

|| 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15, 17.

joicing in the day of her restored blessings: while in the 67th we have *the whole earth* rejoicing in her joys, and re-echoing back her Hallelujahs and Hosannas to the throne of God!

It now only remains that I should state, *in conclusion*, what reason we have to think that the time is not far distant when these great purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the long-lost dominion restored to the Church reigning in conjunction with her King. I would not anticipate the subject of the "signs of the times" in which we live, and which is specially appointed for consideration in a future Lecture. I may, however, be permitted to refer for a moment to *one*, perhaps the most remarkable and striking of them all, as indicating the near approach of the latter-day glory, and in which we have a special and peculiar interest. *I allude to the present existing, and daily increasing, concern of the Christian Church on behalf of the Jewish people.* "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.*"* Never at any former period of their history had the people of the Lord their attention so directed, and their affections so drawn out, to-

* Psalm cii. 13, 14.

wards the stones and dust of Jerusalem. Even in the Holy City itself has our own beloved Church lately established a mission under the highest ecclesiastical sanction. While our sister Church of Scotland has entered on the same sacred field of labour, and manifests the warm interest which she also takes in the welfare of the brethren of our Lord. The Jews are now like dry bones in the graves, but they are to be raised by Divine Power. There is to be, however, a distinct *prophesying* to these dry bones, a prophesying to the wind to come into them; and then God will open these graves, and bring them out by a blessed resurrection, and gather them into their own loved land, under the government of Christ their King. In this blessed work of *prophesying* the purest portions of the Christian Church are now engaged: and all this, as we have seen, is connected with “the time to favour Zion,” and with the appearance of Jesus Christ in his kingdom and glory. “When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.”* Who is there then that will refuse to accept the invitation of the Prophet: “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within

* Psalm cii. 16.

thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of *the house* of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.*

* Psalm cxxii. 6—9.

THE
ORIGINAL PROMISE FURTHER
UNFOLDED

BY THE
PROPHET ISAIAH.

LECTURE VI.

THE ORIGINAL PROMISE FURTHER UNFOLDED
BY THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

BY THE REV. JOHN ELLISON BATES, M.A.
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ISAIAH vii. 14.

The Lord himself shall give you a sign : Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

ISAIAH ix. 6, 7.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

“THE path of the just,” says the wise man, “is as a shining light, shining more and more unto

perfect day.”* Such was the progress of the prophetic announcements, which prepared the way of “The Holy One and The Just”—the promised Messiah.

In the foregoing Lectures we have heard how the first day-spring from on high visited a world of darkness and despair; how, amidst the gloom of sin, a gleam of golden light appeared,—“The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” As time advanced the light shone brighter; one distinguished family was selected to be the depositary of the promise—“To *Abraham* and his seed were the promises made;” and not only made, but in a measure explained; for in his beloved Isaac, whom in a figure he received from the dead, the patriarch “rejoiced to see Messiah’s day, he saw it, and was glad.” But brighter still shone the fair harbinger of approaching day, when unto *David* the Lord was pleased to swear, that “of the fruit of *his* body would He set upon his throne”—“That *his* seed should endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before God.”

Thus far has the promise of the Messiah been traced in the preceding Lectures. Our present subject is, “The original promise further unfolded by the Prophet Isaiah.”—And it may be

* Prov. iv. 18.

treated in one of two modes, which may be termed the *Analytical*, or the *Expository*. We may either analyse the whole Book of the Prophet Isaiah, and gather here and there such predictions as unfold the original promise; or we may take some one particular prophecy, and upon it offer such an exposition as may tend to illustrate the subject before us. If the analytical mode were adopted, we might select such passages as would exhibit the promised seed, under the three-fold character of the Prophet, the Priest, and the King,—offices which, the Jews had learned from the earlier Scriptures, Messiah would fulfil. The Prophet,* like unto Moses—the Priest,† after the order of Melchisedec—the King,‡ to sit upon the throne of David. For instance, we might show how Messiah is exhibited as a Prophet, in the 61st chapter of the Book, where it is written, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.” Or in the 53d chapter, as a Priest, offering up the sacrifice of himself, “the Lamb led to the slaughter,” and “making intercession for the transgressors.” Or in the 11th chapter, as a King, “the Rod out of the stem of Jesse,” the royal “Branch growing out of his

* Deut. xviii. 15.

† Ps. cx. 4.

‡ 2 Sam. vii. 16; Ps. lxxxix. 36.

roots.” But, instructive as such a mode of investigation might prove, it would not be advisable on this occasion: not only would it lead us beyond our necessary limits; but it would not perhaps harmonize so well with the scheme, of which the present Lecture forms a part. The prominent character in which Messiah has hitherto been regarded, is the Regainer of man’s lost *dominion*; and with that view, the promise has been traced into the royal line of the house of David. “I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom.”* Whence we are led rather to take a single prophecy exhibiting Messiah in his Kingly office.

For this purpose a prophecy has been selected, of which the passages in the text form the most striking parts: and I shall endeavour to discharge the pleasing duty of this evening, by offering an exposition of these passages. It seems necessary, however, for the clear developement of the subject, to preface it with some introductory observations of an historical nature. Nor will a reference to history be deemed extraneous, when it is recollected, that our object is to give a view of the *past*, as well as the present and future, purpose of God towards the Jews. And truly, if the records of

* 2 Sam. vii. 12.

past history discover to us, how “precious” this people has been in the sight of Jehovah;* how they have been identified, and interwoven, with the dispensations of his love; our interest in their present and future welfare cannot but be proportionably increased.

The arrangement of the present Lecture will be as follows:—We shall make, first, some **INTRODUCTORY**, and secondly, some **EXPOSITORY REMARKS** and each under three heads. Our *introductory remarks* will embrace:—

1. The interval between the reign of David, and the days of the Prophet Isaiah.

2. The moral condition of Judah, as gathered from the earlier chapters of these prophecies.

3. The peculiar circumstances which called forth the predictions of the text.

Our *expository remarks* will exhibit:

1. The Birth;

2. The Person;

3. The Office of Messiah.

May that blessed Spirit, who inspired the son of Amos to announce, enable us to apprehend, the mystery of God manifest in the flesh.

I. Under the head of **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**, we observe:—

* Is. xliii. 4.

1. Between the reign of David and the days of the Prophet Isaiah, there intervened a period, which was marked, not so much by any fresh prediction, as by the apparent approximation of events already predicted. They who were looking for redemption in Israel might have supposed, that now the perfect day was close at hand. In Solomon, the son and successor of David, they beheld a prince, whose personal qualities, whose growing power, whose peaceful and prosperous reign, must have riveted the admiration, and raised the hopes, of all who were expecting the promised Seed. Eminently favoured of God, he was endued with a measure of wisdom which no human being had ever yet enjoyed. His reign was marked by peace, and unity, and concord within; by freedom from hostile invasion without. His dominion extended "from the river to the land of the Philistine, and unto the border of Egypt." His subjects were so numerous that they are described as "the sand which is by the sea shore in multitude," "not to be numbered or counted." And so abundant were the resources of the kingdom, in foreign supplies as well as in domestic produce, that "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, eating and drinking, and making merry."* And while peace,

* 1 Kings iii. 8; iv. 20, 21, 25.

and plenty, and prosperity gladdened his people, such was the splendour and magnificence of the royal court, that when the queen of Sheba was introduced into Solomon's presence, she declared, "It was a true report that I heard in my own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom; howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and thy prosperity exceedeth the fame that I heard."* But the grandest achievement of this prosperous reign was the erection of that magnificent temple, dedicated to the name of the great Jehovah; an edifice, which testified to succeeding generations the faithfulness of Him who had said, "The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation."†

What could be wanting to complete the glory of this memorable era in Jewish history, but the manifestation of Him, "of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write"—the Seed of Abraham, the Son of David? But, alas! these beams of glory, which seemed to announce that the fulness of the time was almost come, were too soon overcast with clouds. Men "waited for light, but behold obscurity: for brightness, but they walked in darkness." Instead of ushering in

* 1 Kings x. 6, 7.

† Psalm cxxxii. 13.

the expected Redeemer, the illustrious reign of Solomon only presented to the world a melancholy proof, that man, in his best estate, is altogether vanity ; incapable, even when aided by the most enlarged and unlimited resources, of repairing the breach of sin, and restoring to harmony the disorders of a fallen world. “ He that ruleth over men must be just,” (said David, portraying with his dying breath the character of the Lord’s Anointed) “ ruling in the fear of God ; and he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds.”* But clouds, dark clouds indeed, gathered around the nation, ere Solomon’s reign had closed. The fear of God seemed for a season obliterated from the heart of the king. He became estranged from the Lord ; “ his wives turned away his heart after other gods.”† And the Lord, who is a jealous God, inflicted upon the royal house, and upon the nation, the chastisements denounced as the consequence of idolatrous apostasy. The kingdom became impoverished ; assailed by foreign enemies, weakened by internal faction : instead of peace, the alarms of war ; instead of unity, dissension and division ; instead of concord, violence and contention prevailed. So that scarcely had Solomon

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4.

† 1 Kings xi. 3.

slept with his fathers, and Rehoboam his son succeeded to the throne, when ten of the tribes renounced their allegiance, and declared themselves in favour of the rival king Jeroboam. From henceforth the kingdom was divided, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin constituting one dynasty under the kings of Judah; the remaining ten tribes ranging themselves under the usurped sceptre of the kings of Israel. But a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand: consequently we observe a gradual, but growing, national decay, from the days of Solomon to the times of the Prophet Isaiah.

Between the death of Solomon and the age of Isaiah, a period of about 230 years elapsed; during which, eight kings in succession filled the throne of Judah. In the reign of the ninth, King Uzziah, Isaiah began to prophesy. He was remarkably raised up by God, to reprove the nation for its sins, to warn the people of approaching judgments, and to recall them to their allegiance to God, and to the expectation of the promised Messiah.

2. We proceed, secondly, to consider the *moral state of Judah, as gathered from the earlier chapters of these prophecies.*

The searching expostulations and stern reproofs, which occupy a considerable portion of the six

first chapters of the book, indicate that the nation was at this time in a state of pride, oppression, covetousness, sensuality, and apostasy from God. Not that they had abandoned the forms of devotion. The altars streamed with blood: the censers smoked with incense: and multitudes of fed beasts, of bullocks, rams, and goats, were offered as burnt offerings to the Lord. But the hands of the worshippers were full of blood: in their hearts they had revolted, and gone away backward:* they regarded not the work of the Lord, nor considered the operation of his hands.† The promise of a Redeemer, who should bruise the serpent's head, and be their Saviour in the time of trouble, was undervalued. Their own power and policy, and the alliance of neighbouring states, was their favourite resource in every emergency. On this account it was that the Lord had withheld the mercy promised to the fathers. "Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots:

* Isaiah i. 2—15.

† Isaiah v. 12.

their land also is full of idols ; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers made. And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself : therefore forgive them not.”* Idolatry, covetousness, and sensuality, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,”† rendered the nation ripe, rather for approaching judgments than for the promised mercy. And in such a state of apostacy, we might scarcely expect to meet with a single intimation of the predicted Messiah : yet, wonderful to say, such is the clearness, the copiousness, the completeness, of Isaiah’s predictions concerning the Saviour, that, not without reason, has he been designated, “the Evangelical prophet ;” “the fifth Evangelist.” “Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God !” The same free grace, which in the garden of Eden, when man deserved only unmitigated wrath and hopeless condemnation, had given promise of a Redeemer, now perpetuates that promise, notwithstanding man’s repeated forfeiture. But, be it observed, that while God magnifies his free grace in blessing irrespective of human merit, nay, contrary to human merit, He at the same time maintains his character as Moral Governor,

* Isa. ii. 6—9.

† See Isaiah ii. 8 ; v. 8, 11.

and makes manifest his hatred and abhorrence of sin. The prophet therefore is instructed to denounce God's displeasure, and proclaim the woes which the sins of the people were calling down upon them.*

Little or no effect did the testimony of this inspired monitor produce. "Their heart was fat, their ears were heavy, their eyes were shut."† They refused to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. But God is not mocked: if the wicked turn not, he will whet his sword. If the voice of expostulation is not heeded, the chastening hand will speedily be stretched out, and where the threatenings of His word are not regarded, the terrible judgments of his providence must soon arrest the offender. In order, therefore, to punish their sins, and to bring the nation into the posture of supplication for the promised mercy, the Lord permits two most formidable adversaries to invade Judah,—Rezin, king of Syria, and Remaliah, king of Israel: which brings us,

3. To the *peculiar circumstances which called forth the predictions of the text*. We find them related in the 7th chapter of the prophet Isaiah.

* See Isaiah v. 8, &c.

† Isaiah vi. 10.

That the invasion of Judah by these confederate armies was permitted (or rather appointed) of God, as the punishment of Judah's sins, is to be deduced, not indeed from the pages of the prophecy, but from the historic record in the 2nd Book of Kings: "In those days *the Lord* began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah."* The throne of Judah was at this time filled by Ahaz, the son of Uzziah. The king and all his subjects are seized with the greatest consternation. "His heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind."† But mark the tenderness of the compassion of our God. No sooner were these unfeigned symptoms of humiliation and helplessness discovered, than the Lord commissions the prophet Isaiah to carry a message of consolation to the alarmed monarch. "*Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field, and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet ; fear not, neither be faint-hearted.*"

Never are God's people brought low through oppression, affliction, or any trouble, but the Lord is gracious and very pitiful, and repenteth

* 2 Kings xv. 37.

† Isaiah vii. 2, &c.

him of the evil. In this instance, however, Jehovah was *very* jealous for his land, and pitied his people : because these invading foes aimed a blow at the very root of all God's purposes of mercy. His purposes of mercy towards mankind had become interwoven with the history of his people Israel. To one of the tribes of that people, the tribe of Judah, had the promise of the expected Messiah been limited ; even so early as the days of the patriarch Jacob it had been foretold, " The sceptre shall not depart from JUDAH, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come."* It was evident, then, that out of the tribe of Judah must Messiah spring.† Had one been raised up from among any other people, or even from among any other tribe of the Jewish people, he could have produced no credentials ; nor could he have established his claim to be the true Messiah. Such honour was God pleased to put upon his chosen people ; to identify Messiah's appearing with their existence ; to bind up their " life in the bundle of life with the Lord their God."

Now the object which these confederate kings, who invaded the holy city, had in view, was to harass and impoverish Judah, to dethrone the king, and cut off the royal line ; and to set up in his

* Genesis xlix. 10.

† Heb. vii. 14.

place a sovereign of their own choice. Had the attempt succeeded, the house of David must have terminated; the tribe of Judah ceased; and thus God's plan of mercy, through David's anointed Son, have been frustrated. And may we not trace in this the efforts of a deeper, darker agency, than of mere "flesh and blood?" Does not the stratagem bear the infernal impress of "principalities, of powers, of the rulers of the darkness of this world, of spiritual wickedness in high places?" No doubt, that old serpent, dreading the threatened bruising of his head, conceived this scheme for thwarting the counsels of "the faithful God."

But "why do the heathen so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed.—He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision.—Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

Therefore the prophet is commissioned to convey the comforting assurance to the troubled king, "Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in

the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal. Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." Nay more, not only should this counsel fail, but the confederate powers should within a few years themselves be broken ; and the mischief they had devised against Judah should return again upon their own heads. "Within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people." It was at this critical juncture in the history of Judah, that the Lord was pleased more fully to unfold the promise of Messiah. Indeed so clearly were the circumstances of the Redeemer's birth pointed out at this time, that the Evangelist St. Matthew pauses in his narrative, and appeals to the very prediction now delivered.*

We have thus cleared the way, through the path of a very interesting juncture in the Jewish history, to the predictions of my text, which unfold more plainly than had yet been revealed the Birth, the Person, and the Office of the expected Messiah. It may be hoped that the ground over which we have passed, has not been destitute of interest, or devoid of instruction, in harmony with the design of these Lectures.

* Matt. i. 21, &c,

II. We proceed, in the second place, to our EXPOSITORY REMARKS, &c.

1st. We take the prophecy concerning *Messiah's birth*.—In order to give confidence in the nation's extremity, and to confirm to Ahaz the promise of deliverance, the Lord permits him to ask a sign—some extraordinary manifestation of the divine power, either in the depth, or in the height above—let him ask what he would in the whole compass of nature, nothing should be too hard for the Lord. The king however declines the offered mercy. The truth was, he had placed his confidence, not in the promise of God, but in the protection of the king of Assyria. Being resolved to rest upon this arm of flesh, he refused the hand of the living God : and, determined not to trust the Lord, he pretends, with holy reverence, that he will not tempt him : “ Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.” How often does *unbelief* assume the disguise of a holy fear ? But the hypocrisy of this answer was at once discovered. “ Hear ye now, O house of David,” said the Prophet, “ Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also ? Therefore,” (and we might expect that a threat is about to follow,—*therefore* the lips of Prophecy shall be closed ; *therefore* will the Lord withdraw his protection from a rebellious

and gainsaying people ; *therefore*, will he revoke every promise he has ever made, and abandon Jerusalem to the violence of the anemy.) But no! He is "Jehovah, He changes not, therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed." Judgment is his strange work, and mercy rejoices against judgment. "THEREFORE, the Lord himself will give you a sign." And what sign will HE give, whom heaven, and earth, and sea, and all their hosts obey? What will He make his choice? What, but that mystery of mysteries—that wondrous plan of unsearchable wisdom—the amazing contrivance of his everlasting love, the incarnation of the Son of God. As if God would not be deterred in his purpose of mercy, either by the unbelief, or the ingratitude of his creatures; as if (speaking after the manner of men,) Jehovah himself must unburden his heart, and give utterance to the thought in which his "soul delighteth:—" "The Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good; for before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."

Here then we have the promise of the Seed of

the woman further unfolded by the prophet Isaiah.” That we may the more clearly perceive how this prediction bears upon the subject before us, it may be well to disengage it of those circumstantial details, which, if not rightly disposed of, may occasion some embarrassment. That many of the prophetic writings have what is called “a double sense,” was asserted, and established, in the Second Lecture of this series. That the prediction before us belongs to this class, will, we think, be admitted upon mature reflection; or rather, a moment’s reflection will satisfy the reader of the New Testament. But as the Jews do not recognize the New Testament Scriptures, we may, by a less direct but no less undeniable mode of proof, show, from the prophecy itself, that the prediction in the 14th verse refers to an event far more important than any that occurred in the days of Ahaz.

It is obvious, from the context, that the general scope of the passage *has* a reference to the time of Ahaz. It conveyed a *promise*, and a *sign* of the certainty of that promise, that the kingdom should be delivered from the impending danger. The promise was, that Judah should be delivered from the Kings, by whom the land was then invaded. Such was the promise; and it was to be accomplished in the days of Ahaz. But in

addition to the promise itself, a *sign* was given, (which sign indeed contained a promise within it;) but this was not to be accomplished till a later period. If we distinguish between the promise and the sign, (the promise of Ahaz's speedy deliverance, and the sign of the Messiah, given in confirmation of that promise,) the passage, we venture to hope, will receive considerable elucidation. What was the *promise* given to Ahaz? That such should soon be the peace, plenty, and prosperity, in the land then invaded, that by the time the child, whom the Prophet held in his hand, could distinguish right and wrong, he should eat butter and honey, the food of times of peace—for before the child should be able to distinguish right and wrong, the kingdoms which oppressed Judah should both be deprived of their kings. Which promise was literally fulfilled; within three years Pekah, son of Remaliah, was assassinated, and Rezin, king of Syria, slain in battle!* And what was the *sign* that this should be accomplished? “A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” The sign of the coming Messiah: in other words, As surely as Messiah shall come, so surely shall this deliverance be accomplished. It will further elucidate the passage, if we notice

* 2 Kings xv. 30 ; xvi. 9.

that *two* children are spoken of in this chapter. The promise of deliverance refers to one child: and the sign (of that promise) to another. The child born of a virgin, and called Immanuel, was not the *Prophet's* child; for this simple and certain reason, that the Prophet had no child of that name. He had two children, but neither of them, either by name or by nature, was Immanuel. Of the Prophet's children, one was called Shear-jashub,* and the other, Maher-shalal-hash-baz;† Immanuel was distinct from either. We cannot see what shadow of support that interpretation claims, which takes Immanuel to be the Prophet's child. He had no child who either bore that name, or possessed that nature, "God with us."

The child then given as the sign, is not to be confused with the child referred to in the promise: they are distinct. The child referred to in the promise of speedy deliverance is Shear-jashub, the Prophet's child, whom he was directed to take with him; for what purpose? but that he might make use of him, and point to him when he said, "Before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good." The sense is rendered clearer in the Hebrew, by the use of the demonstrative article prefixed to the word *child*; so that it might be

* Chap. vii. 3.

† Chap. viii. 1.

rendered, and is rendered by some of our best expositors,* “*this child.*” This child *whom I hold in my hand.*

And here it may be allowed to offer one more observation upon this passage, as it stands in the English. There is some indistinctness in the 15th verse, “Butter and honey shall he eat, *that* he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.” As if the eating butter and honey was in *order* to make the child distinguish right and wrong; the meaning of which is not very obvious. The difficulty vanishes if we adopt the rendering of the best commentators, and among others, of the Chaldee Interpreter.† Instead of “*that he may know,*” the word may be rendered “*when* he shall know,” i. e. “by the time he shall know” right from wrong, peace, and plenty, and prosperity shall be restored to the land.

But leaving verbal criticism, the question occurs, How would the promise of Messiah, who was not born till many hundred years after, be a sign to Ahaz of the certainty of immediate deliverance? In two ways it was a sign. *First*, The renewal and confirmation of the promise of the Seed of the Woman, would be a proof of the certainty of every other promise. All the promises, all the

* Lowth's Translation. Poole's Annotations.

† See Poole's Annotations.

purposes, all the interpositions, of Jehovah, in behalf of his people, were based upon, and bound up with, the original promise of a Redeemer. The Messiah was the foundation of all the divine promises, and the pledge of their due accomplishment. "All the promises of GOD IN HIM are yea, and IN HIM amen, to the glory of God by us."*

And *Secondly*, Immanuel's birth was a sign to Ahaz of present deliverance, because so closely had God interwoven the Incarnation of His Son with the existence of the tribe of Judah, that the accomplishment of the Incarnation involved the *preservation* of the tribe. The design of the confederate armies was to dethrone the king; destroy the line of succession; and thus obliterate the name of Judah from the earth. Had they succeeded, a Redeemer from the royal line of Judah must have failed: therefore, the renewal of the promise to the house of Judah was a sign of the defeat of the enemies' counsel.

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel."—That an important revelation was about to drop from the Prophet's lips, was indicated by the manner in which the communication was introduced. The

* 2 Cor. i. 20.

word *Behold*, frequently as it is used in Scripture, is never used without force. It fixes the attention, and prepares the mind for something of paramount importance. Do we ask, Wherefore the attention is thus aroused? what is there in this prediction more than there had been in the former revelations of the promise? We reply, It is here foretold a *Virgin* shall conceive, and bear a son. It had been revealed, from the very first, that the Redeemer should be the Seed of the *Woman*; but it was not hitherto made known, that he should be the Son of a *Virgin*. Here then, for the first time, the manner of his Incarnation, and the mode of his miraculous Birth, are disclosed. Here it is foretold that he should be born, not after the ordinary course of nature, but by the extraordinary and miraculous conception of a Virgin; and thus it was intimated that his Birth, unstained by the common pollutions of human nature, should be attended with peculiar marks of divine power and divine purity.

And if for a moment we could address ourselves to the descendants of the house of Judah, we would ask them, Where, within the whole circumference of the world's history, can they point to the fulfilment of this prediction? unless they point to Him, concerning whose Birth another prophet wrote, "The Lord hath created a new thing in the

earth, A woman shall compass a man ? ”* Man, indeed, of the substance of his mother born in the world ; and at the same time “ Immanuel ”—God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world ; Perfect God and Perfect Man. Where will they find one, the circumstances of whose birth, the constitution of whose person, will answer these high and holy designations ? They will not find him in the Prophet’s Son. Thus indeed the Jews interpret the prophecy ; and to cover their untenable position, assert that the word translated “ Virgin ” means no more than a young woman either *married* or *unmarried* ; referring the prediction to the Prophet’s wife. But this explanation is contradicted by fact. Not only can it be shown, that wherever this word occurs in other passages of Scripture it signifies an *un-married* woman : but the very facts, as they stand on the sacred page, disprove it. The child to which the Prophet’s wife gave birth was *not* Immanuel : the Lord himself commanded, “ Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.”† His name

* Jer. xxxi. 22. “ It was a new thing for a Virgin to become a Mother, still remaining a Virgin, and to be the Mother of Him who was God, blessed for ever, though not the Mother of the Divine Nature ; for so Christ answered the type of Melchisedek, without Father as man, without Mother as God.”—*Poole*.

† Chap. viii. 3.

was not Immanuel; neither did his nature justify the appellation.

But One has appeared; and we can point out One, whom the voice of inspiration proclaims to be the very child: "Behold," said the angel to his Virgin Mother, "thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name JESUS." "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."* Names, in the Hebrew, were expressive of some attribute in the person named; hence "*he shall be called*" is often equivalent to the expression *He shall be*. By name the child is Jesus: but forasmuch as the Holy Ghost should come upon the mother, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her, therefore "that holy thing" to which she should give birth SHOULD BE the Son of God. A remarkable instance of this usage is found in a passage which will shortly come under our consideration; describing the *person* of the Child born, the Son given, the Prophet says "His name shall *be called* Wonderful, Counsellor, &c.; denoting that such he shall *be*, and shall be *known* to be. And so, in

* Luke i. 31, 35.

the passage before us, the name Immanuel describes not so much the common appellation by which the child was called, as the nature he should possess, and the office he should execute. By nature, God and Man in one Person ; by office, the Mediator between God and man—in both, Immanuel—"God with us."

That God should dwell with men was not altogether a new revelation. By the mouth of Noah it had been declared, that "God would dwell in the tents of Shem."* Further intimations to the same effect were conveyed by the appointments of the ceremonial law ; and more recently in the erection of Solomon's temple. But how this awful mystery was to be accomplished, had not been so clearly unfolded until now. Solomon in all his glory, and with the advantage of all his wisdom, confessed himself unable to grasp the amazing thought: "Will God indeed dwell on the earth?" Yes, verily, he will. Yea rather, we can say, He has ; for the inspired narrator of the Saviour's birth declared, "*All this was done that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they

* Gen. ix. 27.

shall call his name Emmanuel;" which being interpreted is, "GOD WITH US."*

We may now leave this part of the prophecy, and pass on to Isaiah's discovery of—

2. *The Person of the Messiah.*

It will be seen, upon examination, that from the passage we have just expounded, to the 7th verse of the ninth chapter, is one continuous and connected prophecy; of which the promised Messiah is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. It begins with the announcement of his birth, and closes with the discovery of his glorious Person and office. On the intermediate details time will not allow us to dwell: it is enough to say, that although God was pleased to ratify and confirm the promise of deliverance, he yet threatened heavy chastisements upon the nation for rejecting the promised mercy. They chose to trust in the alliance of the king of Assyria, rather than in the promise of deliverance by God. It was therefore foretold that Assyria, on whom they stayed, should prove their scourge: that their fleshly counsels and feeble confederacies should come to nought. While to such among them as "sanctified the Lord of hosts himself, and made

* Matt. i. 22, 23

him their fear and their dread," he would be for a sanctuary," a safe place amid sorrow and desolation, but for "a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin, and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem : " because, "trouble, and darkness, and dimness of anguish" should be the portion of their unbelief.

Nevertheless,* in the midst of this impending darkness, a brighter prospect breaks upon the Prophet's view. Rapt in prophetic vision, he turns his eyes toward the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphatali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Gallilee of the nations; where the scenes of Israel's sorrow, and approaching captivity by the armies of Assyria, were shortly to be laid. There, in the fulness of time, the clouds are seen dispersing, and "the people that walked in darkness see a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them the light shines." It is the glorious rising of the orb of everlasting day, "The light of the world"—the Sun of righteousness, who rises with healing in his wings, and victory upon his brow. The voice of joy, as hearty as the joy of harvest home, reaches the prophet's ear; as men rejoice when they take the spoil. The

* Chap. ix.

battle is fought, the field is won, and songs of victory proclaim that the Seed of the woman hath bruised the serpent's head ; and this is the burden of their triumphant lay : "Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian." How terrible is the conflict ; war is at all times dreadful : "Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise,"—the shouts of the victors, and the cries of the vanquished—"and garments rolled in blood ;" but this, most terrible, surpasses all : "with burning and fuel of fire." But what is the occasion of this joy ? what gives this confident hope of victory ? It is the accomplishment of the prediction, that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son. Faith, realizing "things not seen as yet," views it as already fulfilled ; "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

With the New Testament in our hands, the ap-

plication of this part of our text is not less clear than that which has gone before. The angel, who brought the glad tidings of great joy to the shepherds of Bethlehem, clothed the announcement in words which call to mind the language of this prophecy: "Unto you is born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And that Messiah is here intended was freely admitted by the earlier Jewish expositors; but, in more recent times, in order to evade a testimony so explicit, concerning the Person and Office of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Jews have departed from the judgment of their forefathers, and applied the passage to king Hezekiah. In what sense Hezekiah could claim the name of "Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," it remains for them to shew. We conceive that we, who, under these divine appellations, recognize the promised seed—the Christ that should come into the world—assign to the Jews more *honour* by our faith, than they can acquire to themselves by their unbelief. We assign to them the distinguished honour, which this prophecy claims, and which the Apostle of the Gentiles concedes, viz. "that *of them*, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever."* It is theirs to say, "Unto

* Rom. ix. 5.

us—*us Jews*—a Child is born ; unto *us Jews* a Son is given”—“Salvation is of the Jews.”* We rejoice to give them the honour God has given them ; and still more shall we rejoice, when they acknowledge that JESUS, though born a child, is the mighty God ; though a Son given, is the everlasting Father. Certain it is, that when they shall thus acknowledge him (and acknowledge him they will), they will find “in Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours,†” every feature of the Person, and every function of the Office here described.

The person of Jesus Christ is here unfolded. He is described “WONDERFUL.” And who so wonderful as our Lord Jesus ? wonderful “in his goings forth from of old, from everlasting ;” wonderful in his miraculous conception ; in his birth in the Inn at Bethlehem ; in his cradle in the manger. Wonderful in his life of sorrow ; and wonderful in his death of shame. Wonderful in his glorious resurrection and ascension ; and wonderful in the gift of the Holy Ghost. Did the children of Zion but know the wonders of redeeming love, well might they sing to Jesus, as their forefathers sang to Jehovah on the shores of the Red Sea, “Who is like unto thee, O Lord among the gods, who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”‡

* John iv. 22.

† 1 Cor. i. 2.

‡ Exod. xv. 11.

He is further described as COUNSELLOR. What counsel so sweet, so soothing, as His, who said, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest ;" who came "to preach glad tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort all that mourn?" Behold him, when on earth, counselling the publicans and sinners to go and sin no more ; the widowed mother, bereaved of her only son, to stay her falling tears ; the rich to lay up treasure in heaven ; the poor to labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life. And even now, what is it that cheers the afflicted Christian in his hour of sorrow ; that sweetens his cup of bitterness and makes him say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted?" what, but the counsel of his compassionate Saviour, carried to the heart by the consoling influence of the Holy Spirit. Truly he is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

Further, He is THE MIGHTY GOD. This title had been ascribed to him by David. In the 45th Psalm, the Psalmist addresses King Messiah, touching whom he wrote, as a mighty warrior, pursuing his way to glory and majesty, by his victorious sword. "*Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*" And then, as if he beheld him returned from con-

quest, and seated on the throne, he says, “*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*” Of these two appellations, “*O most Mighty,*” and “*O God,*” the name before us is compounded: it is literally “God, the mighty one”—El Gibor; and is remarkably appropriate to him who combines the human nature with the divine; the word Gibor, “mighty one,” conveying the idea of a human warrior,* or commander. In the 89th Psalm, where Jehovah is represented as making to David a more full discovery of his purpose, to raise up a Deliverer for his people, he says, “I have laid help upon one that is *mighty,*” i. e. Gibor, “The Mighty One.” In exact accordance with these predictions, the angel, who announced the birth of Jesus to his virgin Mother, gave this as the distinguishing feature of his character: “He shall be great,” or (*μεγας*) mighty—“and shall be called The Son of the Highest;” in other words, he shall be “God, the Mighty One.” And did not our Lord Jesus, in his works, his words, his wisdom, and his warfare, vindicate his claim to this exalted title? Was he not mighty in his *works*, when he gave sight to the blind, strength to the lame, health to the lepers, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead? Yes, his very enemies declared that

* The cognate word “Geber” signifies “a man,” as Job xxxviii. 3.

“mighty works do show forth themselves in him.”* Was he not mighty in his *word*, when with his voice he stilled the winds and waves ; commanded the unclean spirits, and they came out ; when he called the publican from the receipt of custom, and he followed him ; when he spake pardon to the guilty conscience, and peace to the troubled spirit ? Was he not mighty in his *wisdom*, who taught with authority, and spake as never man spake ; riveting the attention of thousands for days together ; confuting the subtleties of the sceptic, confounding the devices of his numerous assailants ? And who so mighty in his *warfare* ? tempted by Satan, taunted by the ungodly, flattered by false friends, frowned upon by open enemies ; in all these things he resisted unto blood, and came off more than conqueror. But that dread conflict who can tell, wherein he bruised the serpent’s head, and “spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them, openly triumphing over them in his cross ?”

Again, He is THE EVERLASTING FATHER.” Such was the Babe of Bethlehem, “His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Several good expositors render this expression “The Father of the everlasting age.” The Jews

* Mark vi. 14.

were in the habit of dividing time into two great portions, or dispensations ; the age that is, and the age that is to come : the former being their time of trial and captivity before Messiah's coming : the latter their eternity of triumph, and rejoicing under Messiah's sway. This title would therefore be at once intelligible to the Jews ; it would denote, that this exalted Personage, though born a child, would, in the age of Israel's glory, be the object of paternal reverence, and gratitude, and love. No longer should they delight to say, " We have Abraham to our father ;" but to the Redeemer should they henceforth look, and say, " Doubtless *thou* art our Father ; though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not ; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer ; thy name is from everlasting."* In Him should they behold, " the Father of many nations." True, the everlasting age of Messiah's full and final triumph has not arrived. " We see not yet all things put under him ;"† but we see, in Jesus our Lord, " The Father of the everlasting age." " The Resurrection, and the Life," " the Author (and so the Father) of eternal salvation ;"‡ to whom is given power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as God has given

* Is. lxiii. 16.

† Heb. ii. 8.

‡ Heb. v. 9

him.* “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”† And not only the promises of his lips, but the expressive language of his life on earth, proclaimed him worthy of the name of “Father.” Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord Jesus pitied them that feared him. The bruised reed he did not break, the smoking flax he did not quench: and as a father spareth the son that serveth him, so with fatherly forbearance he counselled, he corrected, he consoled, he comforted his people.

Lastly, THE PRINCE OF PEACE. This title would be familiar to such of the Jews as were conversant with the Psalms of David.

In the 72nd Psalm a very beautiful description is given of the peaceful and prosperous reign of this Prince. “In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, he shall break in pieces the oppressor.” Whence it appears, that his reign should be a reign, not merely of peace, but of peace established upon sure foundations. There is a seeming peace, which has no solid

* John xvii. 2.

† John vi. 47.

basis ; a peace, obtained by compromise, or coalition, with the foe. Such is the peace with which “the father of lies” cheats his deluded followers. His is peace without pardon of sin—peace without the removal of guilt—peace without victory over Satan—peace without the favour of God—which no more deserves the name of peace, than the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt ; “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”* But under Messiah’s sway “*righteousness* and peace shall kiss each other.” It is peace, established “by righteousness;”†—peace, the purchase of his precious blood—peace, the result of victory over Satan—peace, the fruit of a tremendous conflict with the tempter—the peace of God—of God satisfied for sin, reconciled to man, glorified in the precepts and the penalty of his righteous law. In prospect of this glorious achievement by the Seed of the woman, the heavenly host sang, when they told the tidings of his birth, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men.” In harmony with whom, the ambassadors of God’s pardoning love, when they unfurled the banner of the Cross, proclaimed, “He is our peace”—“He made our peace”—“He came and preached peace, to

* Is. lvii. 20, 21.

† Ps. lxxii. 3.

you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”*

Such is Isaiah’s glowing description of the Woman’s Seed. Such the inspired development of the Person of the expected Deliverer. But *wherefore* was he given? To execute what office? The office of God’s Vicegerent upon earth. This brings us to consider,

3. *The Office of the Messiah.*

We have seen, in a former Lecture, that when the Father of the human race came from his Maker’s hands, he was invested with universal dominion. The government was laid upon his shoulder. And had he kept his first estate, doubtless he would have reigned Jehovah’s representative on earth, and have administered the government of this lower world. But when he broke the law of his Creator, man’s dominion was forfeited; sentence went forth against him, “Remove the diadem, take off the crown, this shall not be the same.”† From sovereign of the earth he became the slave of sin: while his subtle and too successful foe snatched at the crown as it dropped from his brow, caught up the falling sceptre, and proclaimed himself, “The Prince—The God of this world;” pretending that the kingdoms, power, and glory,

* Ephes. ii. 14, 15, 17.

† Ezek. xxi. 26.

were given to him, and to whomsoever he willed he gave them. But the Seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head; and, wresting the usurped dominion from the foe, regain the earth's last government. In order, therefore, to identify this child as the promised Seed, no sooner had the prophet announced His birth, than (borrowing an expression from the custom of bearing the keys and insignia of office upon the shoulder) he declares, "The government shall be upon his shoulder." Having thus identified him as "the sceptre that should rise out of Israel,"* the prophet goes on to describe, in the titles we have just examined, his qualifications for government. Then follows the description of his government, a few brief observations on which may tend to exhibit more clearly the nature of Messiah's office.

(1.) The progress and duration of his government.

The distinguishing marks of Messiah's dominion were, that it should be *increasing*, and *endless*. Since the fall of man, the world had to witness many powerful dominions established in the earth. One after another they arose; and one after another they decayed: "The thrones were cast down." "The iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, the gold, were broken to pieces together,

* Numbers xxiv. 17.

and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors ;”* because they all contained the elements of decay and dissolution ; sin, selfishness, apostasy from God, sealed their inevitable doom. As each sprang up, and promised to defy its predecessor’s downfall, the “ God of vengeance shewed himself ;” he “ uttered his voice, the earth melted ;” “ I will overturn, overturn, overturn it ; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is ; and I will give it him.”† “ His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”‡ Even the favoured and fostered kingdom of Judah had, from the days of Solomon, been on the decay and decrease. Divided against itself, it was being brought to desolation ; but though to be cast down, it should not be utterly destroyed : it should revive as the corn, and grow as the vine : and cast forth its roots as Lebanon.§ “ *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.*” We notice further,

(2.) The seat and capital of Messiah’s government.

Here we trace once more the honour and importance given to the Jewish nation. It is “ upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom.” The

* Dan. ii. 35.

† Ezek. xxi. 27.

‡ Dan. vii. 14.

§ Hos. xiv. 7.

dominion lost was man's dominion. The dominion to be regained is the dominion of *Judah's King* over the tribes of men. The Redeemer's throne must be the throne of David. His kingdom must be called the kingdom of Judah : for " It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow *unto it*. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."* Inquire we, why are the Jews thus honoured ? Why is Jerusalem to be the metropolis of the earth ? We can only say, " Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." Or with Moses, " Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord thy God's ; the earth also, with all that therein is ; only the Lord had a delight in the fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even above all people ; as it is this day." But so fully was it predicted, and so faithfully was it promised, that Messiah's recovered dominion should be administered on the

* Isaiah ii. 2, 3,

throne of David, that when the angel announced the birth of the Saviour of mankind, he proclaimed him heir of the royal line of Judah : “The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”*

(3.) Further, The blessings of his righteous sway.

Every earthly kingdom had seen its honour tarnished, its very existence destroyed, either by the disorders of the people, or the instability of its institutions, or the oppression and injustice of its rulers. The kings that swayed the sceptre had been rebels against God, and, too often, tyrants over their fellow-men. But Messiah’s government will ensure glory to God in the highest, and good-will towards men. He will “order and establish” for the glory of God ; he will administer “judgment and justice” for the good of mankind. “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.” And the blessings of peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety (of which the glories of Solomon’s reign were but shadowy types), shall be enjoyed by the ransomed and restored sons of Jacob. Then will they “say among the heathen, The Lord reigneth : the world

* Luke i. 32, 33.

also shall be established, that it shall not be moved ; he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad : let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein : then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord : for He cometh : for he cometh to judge the earth : he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”*

Does faith falter, and exclaim, How can these things be ? How can David’s kingdom be established, when the subjects of it are scattered, and dispersed, over the face of the earth ? How can Messiah fill the throne of David, when the Lord “has made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground ? ” The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes ? saith the Lord of hosts. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem : and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth, and in righteousness.”† It is a purpose very dear

* Psalm xcvi. 10—13.

† Zech. viii. 6—8.

to the heart of Jehovah. He burns with ardent desire to see it accomplished. He will do it "with his whole heart, and his whole soul."* The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Here we must close our examination of the Prophet Isaiah. We have selected these particular prophecies, because we find them selected by the inspired writers of the New Testament: and with good reason; for they comprehend the germ of the whole matter; they furnish a key to the whole mystery of God manifest in the flesh. Let the Jew but go with us so far, and we are bold to believe he will follow us, through all the testimony of the Evangelical prophet concerning the Person, Character, Work, and Office of the promised Messiah: and applying them all to Jesus of Nazareth, will confess with Nathaniel, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel."†

In recapitulating what has been said, time will allow of but very few reflections. We have taken a view of the interval between David and the prophet Isaiah. We have considered the state of Judah when Isaiah wrote. And we have investigated the circumstances which called forth these predictions. And what reflection shall we make upon all this, but that the Redeemer, whom the

* Jer. xxxii. 41.

† John i. 49.

circumstances of the Jewish people required, was one who must finish *transgression*, make an end of *sin*, make reconciliation for iniquity, and rescue fallen man out of the thralldom of the Old Serpent. The peace, the prosperity, the glory even of Solomon's reign, could confer little permanent good; because not purchased by satisfaction made for sin, not procured by victory over Satan. To the Jew then we say, "Ought not Messiah to be a sufferer, that he might truly be your Saviour? Ought not Christ first to have suffered these things, and afterward to enter into his glory?"*

And secondly, we have examined the predictions of the text concerning the Birth, Person, and Office of the promised Messiah; and we have seen them exactly correspond with the Birth, and Person, and Office of Him who *is* come into the world. Do you then, Christian brethren, with His blessed name upon your lips, and His glorious Gospel in your hands, discharge the commission given to the Gentile Church: "Go through, go through the gates: prepare ye the way of the people: cast up, cast up the high way: gather out the stones: lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Be-

* Luke xxiv. 26.

hold, thy salvation cometh : behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.”* Tell them the Child *is* born, the Son *is* given : and, though not yet, he will soon be revealed in his kingly office, ascend the throne of David, and administer the kingdom of Judah. For the Lord will “arise and have mercy upon Zion ; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. *When* the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall *appear in his glory*.”†

* Isaiah lxii. 10, 11.

† Psalm cii. 13, 16.

SUSPENSION
OF THE
PROMISES TO DAVID, .
PRODUCED BY THE
SINS OF HIS SUCCESSORS ;
AND THE
INTRODUCTION OF “ THE TIMES OF
THE GENTILES.”



LECTURE VII.

PART I.

THE SUSPENSION OF THE PROMISES TO DAVID PRODUCED BY THE SINS OF HIS SUCCESSORS.

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PSALM lxxxix. 30—34.

If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

THE call of Abraham, and the promise that in him, as the great channel of God's mercy to mankind, in the advent of a Redeemer, all the families of the earth should be blessed; the gradual unfolding of this promise, and the covenant made

with David, “that his seed should be established for ever, and his throne built up to all generations,” (Ps. lxxxix. 30—34) have now been fully detailed and enforced in the preceding discourses. But in that covenant there was a remarkable clause and reservation recorded in the words of the text. “If his children forsake my land, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes: nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.” (Psalm lxxxix. 30—34.) The period for the execution of this solemn denunciation at length arrived, though accompanied by the assurance of final mercy. There are various passages in the Scriptures, shewing many of God’s promises to be conditional, and liable to forfeiture. It is otherwise with respect to a covenant. Its privileges may be suspended for a season, but its final execution is certain. It is the suspension of God’s promises to the seed of Abraham, and the causes that prepared the way for so solemn and judicial an act of his displeasure, that we are now called upon to consider. They were once a people distinguished by

the most exalted privileges ; we have now to contemplate them in their decline and degradation.

The history of the Jewish nation, after the time of David, furnishes a mournful catalogue of national guilt, followed by national chastisement and humiliation. The reign of Solomon, in its earlier stages, was distinguished by a splendour and glory typical of Messiah's kingdom ; but it was a glory that was ere long obscured by gross idolatry, and which set in darkness. It is an extraordinary and solemn spectacle to contemplate such early piety, such devotional zeal, and eminent wisdom, terminating, with advancing years, in apostacy from God. The rending of the ten tribes, under Rehoboam, attested Judah's crime and Jehovah's chastisement. But whether the scene of probation was in the city of David, or transferred to the mountains of Samaria, the same proneness is discoverable to besetting sins ; though idolatry was formally proclaimed by Jeroboam, emphatically described as the prince " that made Israel to sin." Why should we enumerate the names of Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Manasses, and others, and God's judgments for their manifold provocations ? The mind, indeed, is relieved by occasional intervals of reviving piety, under a Jehu, an Amaziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah, in the same manner as the eye of the traveller is refreshed, amidst barren

wastes and sandy plains, by the oasis of the desert. But the predominating character of Jewish history is that of habitual and persevering guilt, unreclaimed alike by the solicitations of mercy, or by the terrors of avenging justice. The degeneracy was as universal as it was flagrant. The Prophet was directed to run to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem, and see if a single person were to be found "executing judgment and seeking the truth," and God declared he would pardon it.* The moral contagion had extended to all classes. There was no virtue in exalted rank, no integrity in judgment, no purity of faith or morals in the sanctuary; and such was the spirit of infatuation among the people, that "they loved to have it so," saying, "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits."† Every city had its gods: "According to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah."‡ It was idolatry too in its most aggravated and sanguinary form. Its rites were celebrated within the very precincts of the temple itself. Their sons and their daughters were made to pass through the fire unto Moloch, in the valley of Hinnom, a crime which God declared he would visit on a future day, by making it "the valley of slaughter."§

* Jer. v. 1, and subsequent verses.

† Isaiah xxx. 10.

‡ Jer. xi. 13.

§ Jer. xix. 6.

It is the same that is now known by the name of the valley of Jehoshaphat, and by Mahomedan and Jewish tradition expected to be the scene of the great day of judgment. Well might Jehovah exclaim, "Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"*

The period, therefore, at length arrived, when the divine indignation was awfully poured out, first upon Israel, and subsequently on Judah. Their civil and ecclesiastical polity were overthrown, and the predictions of their Prophet Moses minutely fulfilled. And "the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other." "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind." "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a bye-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee."†

But before we proceed to the investigation of this subject, it is necessary to shew that, prior to the infliction of the Divine judgments, there is always a preparatory day of grace—during which Churches and States, as well as individuals, go

* Jer. xix. 9.

† Deut. xxviii. 37, 64, 65,

through a process of moral discipline, to reclaim them from error, and to warn them of the approaching crisis. It is only after repeated intimations of displeasure, and a long course of admonitory warnings, that the vials of wrath are ultimately poured out on the guilty delinquents.

How forcibly is this fact illustrated in that beautiful and striking enumeration of the Divine attributes, as announced to the prophet Moses! "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation." (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.)

In this statement we see that justice brings up the rear of the Divine attributes. It is the last in order, and the reluctant appendage (as it were) of all the rest. The records of all history, and the experience of every reflecting mind, incontrovertibly establish the fact, that it is only after a long and wilful rejection of the overtures of God's mercy, that men at length perish under the frowns of His justice.

What, then, was the intermediate moral process

and instrumentality employed of God, prior to the suspension of his promises, and covenant towards the Jewish nation? For the elucidation of this inquiry, we must refer to the four great Universal Empires, predicted by the prophet Daniel, as successively swaying the destinies of mankind; and see how they were made subservient to the moral purposes of God in His dealings towards his people. The four great empires of Daniel afford one of the most instructive exhibitions of a Moral Governor of the world ever submitted to the contemplation of the philosopher, the statesman, and the Christian. We see each of them successively arising, and attaining the plenitude of power and greatness; and after a long and splendid career of universal conquest, they alternately fall, and are replaced by their victorious rival.

All this is accomplished in the natural order of events, and by the operation of secondary causes; and yet each arose in the order, time, and manner, prescribed by Almighty Wisdom. Each fulfilled the Divine will and pleasure, and then made room for another kingdom, which was the subject of a similar dispensation. The sun, and moon, and the starry host of heaven, could not fulfil their courses with more regularity of succession, than did these mighty empires. They rose, and they fell, at the fiat of Omnipotence; they shone with their transitory glory, and then sunk into the night of ages.

But it is in reference to God's ancient people that we are more particularly to consider these great empires.

And, first, that of Assyria.

The following passage in Isaiah (ch. x. ver. 5, 6, 7,) is highly explanatory of the purposes of God on this subject. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." "Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." We see here, and in various other passages that might be adduced,* how God employed the Assyrian nation as His instrument for the punishment of rebellious Israel and Judah. Ambition drew the sword, but it was the Lord that directed the weapon. Fearfully indeed was this prediction accomplished, first, in the captivity of the Ten Tribes under Shalmanezar; and subsequently by the Babylonian captivity of seventy years inflicted upon Benjamin and Judah.

From the former captivity the Ten Tribes]

* See more particularly Jer. xxv. 9, 10, 11.

never returned; nor is it precisely known where the great mass of them are to be found. They seem to lie buried in the obscurity of ages. They are justly and emphatically designated by the title of *the Ten lost Tribes*. They are hid to the eye of man, but they are known to the eye of God. With his own mouth Jehovah hath proclaimed, "*For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve; yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*" (Amos ix. 9.) All shall be discovered, all shall be gathered at the appointed time. "*Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their land, and have left none of them any more there.*" (Ezek. xxxix. 28.)

As Babylon was the instrument of God's chastisement of the Jews, so was the Medo-Persian empire, the next in order and succession, the medium of His signal mercy towards *them*, and of His wrath against their oppressors.

It is impossible to see the minuteness with which all these events were predicted and accomplished; without feelings of sublime admiration. The manner in which Cyrus, the "ravenous bird from the East," (Isaiah xlvi. 11), was raised up, and his future triumphs announced: "I will stir

up the Medes against them :” (Isa. xiii. 17.)
“ Go up, O Elam, besiege, O Media :” (xxi. 2.)
“ the drying up of the river Euphrates, and the opening of the two-leaved gates,” (xlv. 1.) ; The especial design of God in this event : “ for Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name, I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me ;” the overthrow of Babylon, and its future desolation ; what powerful testimonies do these predictions afford to the truth of a divine revelation ; and what an argument may be drawn from fulfilled prophecy, to check the pride and arrogance of modern “ Infidelity !” * “ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. Neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there ; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there, and

* See Dr. Keith’s celebrated work on fulfilled prophecy, a production which merits a place in every Library ; and which has acquired for its author no less distinction in foreign lands, than it has earned for him a title to public gratitude in his own country.

satyrs shall dance there.” (Isaiah xiii. 19—21.)* Nor can a nobler specimen of sublime eloquence be found in the pages of the most celebrated writers of antiquity, than in the following beautiful personification, and address to fallen Babylon.† “Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak, and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy vials: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.”‡

While the overthrow of Babylon, the mystical representative of the enemies of the Church, is thus faithfully predicted; the restoration of the Jews after the seventy years’ captivity, and the rebuilding of their temple and city under Cyrus,

* Modern travellers attest the accuracy with which these predictions have been accomplished. See more especially the late Mr. Rich’s Memoir on Ancient Babylon.

† Isaiah xiv. 8—11.

‡ See also 16—20.

is not less minutely announced: "He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives;" (Isa. xlv. 13) "that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." (xlv. 28.) What an assemblage of facts are here laid before us, long before the period of their accomplishment! How they illustrate a supreme moral governor over the nations of the earth, raising up one, and casting down another! How more particularly they evince his unwearied love and paternal care over His own people, and the return of his mercy, after a long period of national sorrow and humiliation.

These were the bright days of Judah's happiness, and the era of reviving zeal and piety. Her warfare was accomplished, her iniquity pardoned, and she had received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.* The Prophecies, announcing the return of the Jews on this occasion, are expressed in such glowing language, and so descriptive of a high state of national peace and blessedness, as to have led many to confound the predictions referable to their final restoration and conversion, and to the millennial blessedness con-

* Isaiah xl. 2.

sequent on that period, with this antecedent event. Both may be reconciled by considering that these predictions had an inchoate or primary accomplishment in the return from Babylon ; and will have a secondary and still more enlarged and ultimate fulfilment in the universal return, not only of the Jews, but also of the ten lost tribes.* But splendid and promising as was this period of Jewish History, it was, alas ! but transitory in its duration ; so true is it that as long as any root of bitterness remains behind, and the heart is a stranger to a real and inward vital change, the most awful judgments, or the most signal mercies, will fail in producing that abiding impression which it is the prerogative alone of divine grace to effect in the soul.

Next, therefore, comes the Macedonian or Grecian empire, the third mighty engine for executing the purposes of Jehovah, and carrying on the same process of moral discipline to reclaim his still backsliding people. Here we see Egypt and Syria by turns arrayed against the Holy City, now in the person of a Ptolemy, the son of Lagus ;†

* The theory of a first and secondary interpretation of Prophecy is laid down by the most eminent interpreters of Prophecy.

† Josephus's Antiquities, book 12, ch. i.

then in that of an Antiochus Epiphanes.* Behold, in the latter case, the temple profaned, its altars violated, the sacrifices suppressed, the sacred vessels plundered, and “the abomination of desolation,” predicted by the prophet Daniel, polluting the holy sanctuary; while ten thousand weeping captives proclaim the greatness of the crime, in the severity of the punishment.

Once more the day of mercy dawns upon the Jews, and the Lord raises up a great deliverer. The sword of Judas Maccabeus, like the sword of Gideon, puts to flight the armies of the aliens, and the land is free.

Last of all, in the mighty link of God’s dispensations, comes the Fourth or Roman empire; during which we are called upon to witness the suspension of God’s promises, and the final overthrow

* The book of Maccabees, recording the state of the Jews at that period, observes; “In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us, for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow. So this device pleased them well. Then certain of the people were so forward herein, that they went to the king, who gave them licence to do after the ordinances of the heathen. Whereupon they built a place of exercise, at Jerusalem, according to the customs of the heathen; and made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and were sold to do mischief.”—*Maccabees, book I. i. 11—15.*

† Josephus’s Antiquities, book 12, chap. v.

of the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jewish nation. But we have seen, however, that it was not till after a long preparatory course of solemn warnings and manifold mercies, line upon line, and precept upon precept, that the Lord at length drew the weapons from his armoury, and that his arrows went forth "like the lightning," and his judgments "like the whirlwind of the south." But how many pathetic appeals were mingled with these solemn denunciations! How earnest and tender the language of remonstrance, as recorded in the Prophets! "O my people, what have I done unto thee? wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me." How affectingly does the Lord contrast the gracious purpose for which he formed them, and their abuse of his mercy. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise."—"But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob: thou hast been weary of me, O Israel."—"Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities."* And again, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as

* Isaiah xliii. 21, 22, 24.

the waves of the sea.”—“Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof: his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.”* Where too was there ever recorded a more sublime or affecting spectacle of divine compassion, than that of the Saviour weeping over Jerusalem, and predicting its final and complete overthrow? “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it:” “saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace: but now they are hid from thine eyes.”—“For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side;” “and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” (Luke xix. 41—44.)†

* Isaiah xlviii. 18, 19.

† It was on the occasion of our Lord's return from Bethany, the city of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, that the affecting incident here recorded, occurred. The road lies over the Mount of Olives, by a path-way that intersects the mountain. No position can be selected more commanding, or more singularly adapted to present an extensive and uninterrupted view of the whole city. There the traveller may stand, realizing the scene described by the Evangelist, and the sublime associations connected with such solemn recollections. There may he meditate on the past history and present degradation of that devoted city, and anticipate its future glories.

Seventy years after was the prediction above recorded awfully accomplished, and the bitter cup drank to its last dregs. On the hill called Scopas, lying northwards of the city, on the self-same spot where the Assyrian army, 599 years before Christ, had formerly planted its standard, and commenced the siege, there did the Roman army under Titus take its position, to achieve the same purpose, and to level Jerusalem with the ground.

There is generally a singular adaptation in all God's judgments, in their time and circumstances, to the character of the transgression committed. Thus Josephus remarks, "that neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever produce a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world," (Book 5, c. 10.) "I suppose," he adds, "that had the Romans made any longer delay in coming, the city would either have been swallowed up, by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as that by which the country of Sodom once perished: for it had brought forth a generation of men much more atheistical than were those that suffered such things," (Book 5, Chap. 13.) "It is God, therefore, it is God himself who is bringing on this fire to purge the city and temple by means of the Romans, and is going

to pluck up the city, which is full of pollutions.” (Book 6, c. 2.) Great was their crime, great also was their punishment. The prediction that “the tender and delicate woman, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, should look with an evil eye toward her young one, and toward her children which she should bear; and that she should eat them for want of all things secretly, in the siege and straitness wherewith the enemy should distress them, in their gates;” (Deut. xxviii. 56, 57.*) all this was fearfully verified.† Nor is it less worthy of remark, that the Temple was burnt in the same month, and on the self-same day, wherein it was formerly consumed by the king of Babylon, 639 years and 45 days after its erection under Cyrus.‡

Who can contemplate so great a catastrophe, without exclaiming, “How terrible art thou in thy works, O God! Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee,” (Ps. lxvi. 3.) Well might Zion say, “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord

* See also Jer. xix. 9.

† See Josephus, book 6, ch. 3.

‡ Book 6, ch. 5.

hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." (Lamentations i. 12.) The calamity was as universal in its character, as it was tremendous in its consequences. Her civil and ecclesiastical polity were overthrown, and continue so to the present day. "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." (Hosea iii. 4.) The mosque of Omar occupies the ground where once rose the temple of Solomon. "Her holy solemnities have ceased; all her gates are desolate; her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness." (Lamen. i. 4.) The songs of Zion no longer re-echo the praises of Jehovah, and the stranger possesses the land, which is become barren and desolate. This last characteristic was distinctly foretold. "The day of the Lord cometh to lay the land desolate." (Isaiah xiii. 9.) "Their land is desolate, because of his anger." (Jer. xxv. 38.) "I will lay the land most desolate." (Ezek.) The same is predicted of the mountains and cities. "The mountains of Israel shall be desolate." (Ezek. xxxiii. 28.) "Thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant." (Jer. iv. 7.)

It is impossible for the traveller to read these passages, without being forcibly struck with the accuracy of the description. I can bear testimony

to their truth, from recent personal observation. The country once represented as a land “of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills ;” “A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates ; a land of oil olive, and honey ;” “A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it ; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayst dig brass :” (Deut. viii. 7, 8, 9.)—this region no longer presents its former aspect of luxuriance and beauty. Cities once famed in sacred story, have now disappeared, or are to be traced only in their scattered fragments. The plain is strewed with the remains of the ancient Sarepta, or Zarephath, where the Prophet once raised up the son of the widowed mother. The city of Cæsarea, where the prayers and alms of Cornelius came up for a memorial before God ; where the Spirit was poured out on the first Gentile convert ; and where Paul, imbued with a holy eloquence, constrained Agrippa to exclaim, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian ;” is now a wide-spreading desolation ; and its once lofty portico, and broken marble columns, lie sparkling in the waves. Bethany, where Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, and re-animated the cold clay, is now a heap of ruins. The grave is said to survive, as if to attest the recorded miracle ;

and the surrounding ruins no less proclaim the predicted desolation. Jericho, once the celebrated "City of Palms,"* and of whose surrounding region Josephus remarks, "that he who should pronounce this place to be divine, would not be mistaken, wherein is such plenty of trees produced as are of the rarest and most excellent sort ;† this famed city now consists of a few miserable huts, and has lost its characteristic feature. The plain of Jordan around is a scene of barrenness and desolation. Mephitic vapours infect the air, and incrustations of salt lie sparkling on the surface of the ground, relieving its otherwise yellow and sulphuric tinge. The shores of the Dead Sea are appalling to the eye of the beholder. Along the line of Engedi, beyond Jordan, scattered stones and fragments of ancient walls are visible, the remains of cities whose very names are now lost and forgotten. There are portions, even within the walls of Jerusalem itself, where there are numerous remains of ruined houses, with the grass springing up from amidst the accumulated earth, "a joy of wild asses and a pasture for flocks," according to the prediction of Isaiah, xxxii. 14. There have I stood on the rising ground, to the left of the gate of St. Stephen ; there have I contemplated the sur-

* Judges i. 16 ; iii. 13.

† Josephus de Bello, l. iv. c. 8.

rounding desolation; and, with the Lamentations of Jeremiah in my hand, have exclaimed in the words of the Prophet: "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and Princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!" (Lamen. i. 1.) The environs of the city, once so celebrated for its trees and gardens, are now (to the north and west more particularly) stripped of their former embellishment.

In short, wherever you go, the vine languisheth; the pride of Lebanon, the excellency of Carmel, and the rose of Sharon, are departed, and tracts of land lie waste and neglected; while the indolence of the Turk is the cause and instrumentality by which the curse is accomplished.

I would here beg to address myself to the Jew, presuming some of that nation to be now present, and ask what was it that filled up the measure of the iniquities of your forefathers, and brought down this terrible mark of the divine displeasure, and has prolonged its duration even to the present day? Great as were their transgressions, it was the rejection of the Redeemer that constituted the seal and consummation of their guilt. They refused to receive the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, the atoning sacrifice for sin, though

the sacrifices of the Levitical law prefigured the true Paschal Lamb, and could have no meaning or efficacy but as types of a Redeemer; though the prophet Isaiah expressly foretold, “he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter:”* and Daniel declared, “Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;” that the period of his mission should be at the expiration of the seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years after the building of the second temple;† and that the design of his coming should be to “finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity.”‡ It was still further predicted, as if to combine the cause and its effect, the guilt with its punishment: “The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;” and that the end thereof should be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations were determined. (ver. 26.) If history be the interpreter of prophecy; if it be justly called “philosophy teaching by example,” the accurate fulfilment of these several predictions might well rebuke the incredulity of the Jew, and lead him, in penitential sorrow, to the cross of the Saviour.

* Isaiah liii 7.

† According to the Scriptural mode of computation, the 70 weeks are to be interpreted as weeks of years, or 490 years. See Ezek. iv. 6.

‡ Dan. ix. 24, 26.

But the Jews have adopted the errors and crimes of their forefathers, and, in so doing, have incurred all the penal consequences. They have mistaken the nature of Messiah's kingdom, and anticipated earthly triumphs, instead of a spiritual reign of universal peace and holiness. They have confounded a suffering with a triumphant Saviour; and yet can have no share in the latter, without going through the humbling process of first recognizing the former. It was for the rejection of a suffering Messiah, that your city and temple were overthrown; that your country was left unto you desolate, your nation "scattered among the four winds of heaven;" and that you continue, unto this day, "wanderers among the nations," without a home, without an altar, and without a sacrifice. O! may He who can alone remove the veil from the heart, give you the grace to see the truth, and the fervent desire to embrace it; for never, until you acknowledge this fundamental principle of faith, that Christ Jesus is the true Messiah, will you be reinstated in your national privileges, and the days of your mourning be ended.

In the midst of all these terrible judgments, Jehovah still remembers the covenant that he made with their fathers, and confirmed unto David. "If his children forsake my law, and

walk not in my judgments ; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments ; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. *Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*"

This promise still stands unrepealed ; and the extraordinary signs of the times indicate its approaching fulfilment. The Jews are broken off indeed from the true olive tree, but it is with the purpose of being grafted in again. They are "cast down, but not destroyed ;" having nothing, and yet still the heirs of an imperishable inheritance. "They are peeled, scattered, persecuted ; an astonishment, a proverb, and a bye-word among all nations ; and yet still preserved, because designed to be "a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in the hand of the Lord." (Isaiah lxii. 3.) Their bond of union is the sense of their own misery, and the consciousness of God's future purposes of grace and mercy. They are the living monuments of his avenging justice in their dispersion, as they are reserved to be the memorials of his faithfulness and truth in their restoration and conversion. No provocation, however great, has ever been able to invalidate their claim, and to efface them from the book of God's remembrance. The title deeds are still

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preserved in the records of heaven, and the name of Jacob is inscribed upon them by an Almighty hand. "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever." (Jer. xxxi. 35, 36.) The Jews resemble a mighty ruin, on which the storm has often spent its strength, and time levelled its destroying hand. The battlements are fallen, and the foundations impaired; yet the edifice still bears the traces of its original grandeur, majestic in its desolation. But there is a promise which survives the wreck of time and the lapse of ages; written in imperishable characters, and conveyed in accents of paternal tenderness and love. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stone. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." (Isa. liv. 11—13.)

LECTURE VII.

PART II.

INTRODUCTION OF "THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES."

 LUKE xxi. 24.

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

THE entire overthrow of the Jewish nation by Titus, and their subsequent dispersion, formed a most remarkable era, not only in the history of nations, but in the purposes of God, and in the general administration of His church. Hitherto that people had been the exclusive depositories of His will, and the only medium of communicating it to mankind. They were the "peculiar people," "the chosen seed," "the royal priesthood"—"You only have I known of all the families of the earth."* "Ye are my witnesses."† "To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ser-

* Amos iii. 2.

† Isaiah xliii. 10.

vice of God and the promises.”* But Judah now had ceased to be a people ; their beautiful temple was razed to its foundation ; Zion was “ploughed like a field,” and they were “wanderers among the nations.” How then was this former instrumentality to be replaced, and by what intervention was the Lord henceforth to be made known ? Where was to be the church, where its ministrations, and where was the fire that was to burn upon its altars ?

By one of those beautiful figures so frequent in the Bible, the Lord Christ is introduced as thus lamenting the result of his labours, and the failure of his mission to the Jews : “Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain ; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.”† The Holy One of Israel then comforts him by the announcement of the forthcoming Gentile dispensation. “And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of

* Romans ix. 4.

† Isaiah xlix. 4.

Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”* And again: “In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.†”

This subject leads me to consider “the *times of the Gentiles*,” and the proper import and signification of that expression. I beg particularly to draw attention to this question, because so much error and misconception is connected with it. This misconception it will be my object to endeavour to remove,—as the right understanding of the Jewish question, and of several Scriptural passages, are deeply involved in the discussion.

In the following remarks I propose to consider the times of the Gentiles:—

I. In their enlarged sense, design, and character.

II. In their peculiar and prophetic sense; or the time during which Jerusalem will be “trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

III. The termination of this period, the judg-

* Isaiah xlix. 5, 6.

† Heathen lands.

ments that will accompany it, and the glorious results that will follow. The various misconceptions which prevail on these heads, will be severally considered in their right place.

I. The “ times of the Gentiles ” in their more general and enlarged sense.

In this view we may interpret the words as implying *the Gentile dispensation*, or period of time allotted to the Gentiles for their probation. The Gentile is one of a series of dispensations, the object of all which is to unfold the manifold wisdom of Jehovah, and to vindicate his equity and truth. The first in order is the dispensation in Paradise, or man in a state of innocency. From this state he fell, and brought sin and death into the world, which proves the failure of that dispensation. The Ante-diluvian period followed; and the universal deluge attests its character and consequences. To this succeeded the Patriarchal, which exhibited, in its earliest ages, the most eminent examples of faith and piety; but the address of the dying Jacob to his children, records how, with the exception of Joseph and a small portion of his brethren, the descendants had degenerated from the piety of their forefathers. (Genesis xlix. 1—27.) Next came the Mosaic dispensation; and the abuse of

its high privileges, and its final overthrow by the righteous judgment of God, we have considered in the antecedent discourse. We at length arrive at *the Gentile dispensation*, or “times of the Gentiles;” that is to say, the time allotted, in the wisdom and goodness of God, to the Gentile world, to accept the proffered mercy of the Gospel, in order that *they* may have *their* day of probation, as well as preceding ages. This dispensation greatly surpassed the Mosaic, and replaced it with ends far more noble and enlarged; for it was more beneficent in its design, more sublime in its character, more comprehensive in its extent, and more glorious in its results. The Mosaic limited the communication of its blessings to a single nation. The Gentile embraced in its ample circumference “Every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”* The former enriched the few, but impoverished the many; the latter enriched all, and impoverished none. It opened the portals of heaven to all who sought admission there through faith in a Redeemer. It obliterated all distinctions; broke down all partition walls; and united all in the participation of one common blessing, whether Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free.† Christ was to be “all

* Rev. xiv. 6.

† Col. iii. 11.

in all.” It was not, like the former dispensation, cumbered with ceremonies and carnal ordinances, which neither they nor their forefathers could bear. It was “the glorious liberty” of the Gospel, the freedom with which Christ makes his people free. Its moral and transforming power was expressed under the similitude of “floods poured on the dry ground,” and “streams flowing in the desert;”* while its fruits were “righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.” It was not Moses with the veil, but God seen with open face, as in a mirror, reflecting all the Divine attributes, by the contemplation of which the soul is assimilated to his glorious image. “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”† Its benign object was to raise the fallen, to comfort the depressed, to invigorate the weak, to pardon the guilty, and to save the lost. It was “the great mystery of godliness” hid from ages. “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”‡ Heaven and earth were alike interested in the development of its wonderful details. “To the intent

* Isaiah xxxv. 6 ; xlv. 3.

† 2 Cor. iii. 18.

‡ Tim. iii. 16.

that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might he known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.”* Types and ceremonies prefigured it; prophets foretold it; angels from heaven announced it; the Son of God himself proclaimed it; signs and wonders confirmed it; salvation was its theme, and life and immortality its final and glorious consummation.

It is not my design to state how the Gospel was propagated by the Apostles and their successors in the earlier ages of the Church, nor of its subsequent results. It is sufficient to observe, that it was published throughout the greater part of what is called the Roman world; and that the efforts and devotedness of those times convey a strong reproach against the diminished zeal of succeeding ages. My present object is rather to shew *the design of the Gentile dispensation in reference to the Jews*; and also to prove that a provision was still made in favour of that people; and that they were never excluded from a participation in the blessings of the Gospel. Though the primary object of the Gentile dispensation was to enlarge the bounds of the Church, and to make the Gentiles “fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by

* Eph. iii. 10.

the Gospel,"* yet one of its special designs was "*to provoke the Jews unto jealousy.*" This purpose is first intimated so far back as in Deut. xxxii. 21, "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." St. Paul particularly refers to this passage in Romans x. 19: "Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you." The call of the Gentiles, and God's purpose of visiting them with the light of the Gospel, is evidently here announced, that the Jews might be made more sensible of the loss of their privileges, and provoked unto jealousy, when they saw them transferred to others.

That such was the effect produced is evident from St. Paul's address to the assembled multitude at Jerusalem. Speaking of the commission which he had received, he makes known the divine command imparted to him in a vision: "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."† We are told, "they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said,

* Eph. iii. 6.

† Act's xxii. 21.

Away with such a fellow from the earth ; for it is not fit that he should live. And they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air." *

The Jews were a haughty nation, inflated with the sense of their own importance and exalted privileges. They could not therefore bear the dishonour of seeing the pre-eminence, which they had so long enjoyed, taken away, and the inheritance, transmitted to them by patriarchs and prophets, usurped, as they thought, by strangers. In like manner, when Christ told them that the Lord would give the vineyard to others, it is added, " And when they heard it they said, God forbid."† Such a declaration wounded all their hereditary prepossessions, and deeply humbled their national pride. They had Abraham for their father, the friend of God: Patriarchs for their ancestors ; Prophets for their teachers ; and the Temple for their worship ; and, under the shield of such mighty names, they anticipated no reverses. But, alas ! What is Abraham's name without Abraham's faith ? what is a splendid line of ancestry, if the virtues that once adorned it, and stamped it with honour and usefulness, are passed away ? What are the highest privi-

* Acts xxii. 22, 23. † Luke xx. 16.

leges, such as temples, ordinances, prophets, and prescriptive rights, if the glory be departed ; and if, while every thing is holy without, all is unholy, and cold, and polluted within ?

What is mainly wanting among us Gentiles is to convert this jealousy into more of a godly character ; and to be careful, while we can appeal to evidences the most conclusive of the divine truth of Christianity, not to derogate from this high ground ; but to confirm its Divine original, by the commanding evidence and efficacy of Christian example.

The reproach cast upon us by the Jews is that of pretending to a heavenly creed, and exhibiting an earthly practice. The progress of Christianity, both amongst Jews and Pagans, is unquestionably retarded by the lives of the great mass of professing Christians. In the primitive ages of the church, the success of the Gospel was powerfully aided by the singular holiness as well as the zeal of the early Christians. They were “ Epistles written in the heart, known and read of all men.”* The same apostle, who preached “ among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,” was able to say, “ Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you.”†

* 2 Cor. iii. 2.

† 1 Thess. ii. 10.

Again: *the Jews were not excluded by the Gentile dispensation from a share in its blessings.* The duty of dispensing the Gospel to the Jews is not understood by a large portion of the Christian world: it is peremptorily denied by some, of whom we might hope better things. It is alleged that they lie under the ban of the Divine displeasure, that they are judicially blind, and will remain so, till an appointed time which is not arrived; and when arrived, that their conversion will be effected, not by human means, but by some extraordinary and miraculous interposition of Almighty God. Any attempt therefore to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, is represented to be a wild and visionary enterprize; impracticable in its object, and a presumptuous interference with the purposes of God. It is by such reasoning as this that the poor Jew has been consigned to supreme neglect for nearly eighteen hundred years; too vile to be reclaimed; too much beyond the reach of mercy to be the proper object of Christian benevolence. How justly may the Jew exclaim: “No man careth for my soul;” and how true is the prediction, “This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.”* God’s will and word are both pleaded in justification of this

* Jer. iii. 13.

neglect. It is from these two sources that we venture to impeach the justness of the conclusion, however we may acquiesce in some of the premises.

Whatever may be the purposes of God with respect to the Jews, those purposes are not the rule of our conduct, but His Divine commands. "Secret things belong to the Lord our God ; but the things which he has revealed to us and to our children." The commission given by our Lord to his disciples, and through them to his church to the end of time, was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." No part of this commission has yet been repealed. So long therefore as the Jew is one of those creatures, and belongs to the great family of men, he is entitled to his share in the blessings of the Gospel. He possesses all the general claims of the Gentile, and he can plead all the superadded rights of the Jew, as the instrument by whom these blessings were originally conveyed to mankind.

But there is even a priority of claim on the part of the Jew, founded upon the express injunction of Christ, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* St. Paul, also, in de-

* Luke xxiv. 47.

fining the Gospel, describes it to be “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* Thus the Jew possesses not only an equality of right, but even a priority of claim over the Gentile. He may reject the offer, but with that rejection we have nothing to do. It is our duty to make it; and we cannot decline the performance of this duty without incurring the guilt of violating a divine command.

Besides, however the Jews may be cast away *nationally*, they never were excluded *individually*. There was always what St. Paul calls “a remnant according to the election of grace.”† To that remnant, then, it is our duty to proclaim the Gospel, leaving the application of its truths to God.

The same Apostle also assures us that “*blindness in part is happened unto Israel.*”‡ If *total blindness* had befallen them, our labours would indeed be unprofitable. But so long as it is a “*blindness in part*” only, let us proffer the glad tidings of salvation to the remaining portion, and thus present the double trophy of both Jew and Gentile at the cross of the Saviour.

II. We have to consider “*the times of the*

* Rom. i. 16.

† Rom. ii. 5.

‡ Rom. ii. 25.

Gentiles,” in its peculiar and prophetic sense ; or the time during which Jerusalem is to be “ trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

This period is more particularly predicted by the prophet Daniel, and is a determinate portion of time, marked by the Church being in a depressed state, and in the power of its enemies. Its termination, or “the time of the end,”* is to be distinguished by signal judgments against these oppressors ; by their entire overthrow ; and also by the restoration and conversion of God’s ancient people : “ And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.”† This prophetic period is twice mentioned in Daniel, and occurs five times in the Apocalypse. In Dan. vii. 25, it is called, “ *A time, times, and the dividing of time* or three years and an half ;” and in Dan. xii. “ *Time, times, and an half.*” In Rev. xi. 2, we have a corresponding number : “ The holy city shall they tread under foot *forty and two months.*” In Rev. xi. 3, it is stated “ they (the two witnesses) shall prophesy *a thousand and two hundred and sixty score days*, clothed in sackcloth.” And again Rev. xii. 6, “ And the woman (the Church) shall be carried into the wilderness, where she hath a place

* Dan. xii. 4.

† Dan. xii. 7.

pared of God, that they should feed her there *a thousand two hundred and three-score days.*”

All these prophetical periods, though varying in expression, denote the same duration of time. In the symbolical language of Scripture, a day signifies a year.* The ordinary Jewish year consisted of 360 days, therefore three years and a half make exactly 1260 days. In like manner the Jewish month consisted of 30 days, and 42 months contain 1260 days. All of the above numbers, when reduced to their integral parts, make one and the same period of 1260 days.

Allusion is made to a similar period in Luke xxi. 24, which we have already quoted. According to Horsley and Mede, this prophetic season signifies the latter period of the Gentile monarchies, at the end of which the awful convulsions of the nations are to commence, preceding the Restoration and Conversion of Israel.

I shall not here enter into the controversy as to the precise time from whence this prophetic period takes its date. According to Mr. Faber, the year 606 is assigned as the proper era when

* See Numbers xiv. 33 : “ forty days,” each day for a year, “ even forty years.” Ezek. iv. 4—6 : “ I have appointed thee each day for a year.” This mode of computation is also fully established by the celebrated seventy weeks in Dan. ix. 24, which is proved to be a period of 490 years.

the Papal Apostacy and Mahometan Imposture are supposed simultaneously to have arisen. This interpretation brings us to the year 1866, as the termination of the times of the Gentiles, and the period for the conversion of the Jews. Mr. Cuninghame fixes an earlier date, and specifies such powerful arguments in favour of that supposition as to render it highly probable.*

Whatever may be the real date, the signs of the times are too extraordinary not to awaken the conviction that an eventful crisis is drawing near. The signs of the times are perhaps, after all, the safest guide, and the most conclusive. Time is the best interpreter of Prophecy. Not that we are to wait for the result, and suppress intermediate inquiry. Whatever is revealed is the proper and legitimate subject for Christian investigation. But it is more especially our duty to trace the march of events in the spirit of prayer, and with the watchfulness of the Christian; and to draw from them the conclusion to which we are directed by our Lord: "So when ye shall see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."†

The characteristic feature predicted of this period peculiarly demands our attention, viz

* See Cuninghame's Dissertation on the 1260 Years.

† Luke xxi. 31.

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

Jerusalem has indeed been trodden down of the Gentiles ; nor could any term have been selected more expressive of the oppression, scorn, and degradation, of which for successive ages the Jews have been the unhappy victims. The page of history throughout Europe abounds with the melancholy details. The religion of the Jews formed the pretext, their wealth was the inciting motive. The solemn denunciations proclaimed in Deut. xxviii. have been indeed awfully fulfilled: "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other. . . . And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest : but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind : and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee ; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life." (vers. 64, 65, 66.) Not only has the prophecy been fulfilled as emblematical of the nation ; but Jerusalem itself, literally considered, has been trodden down of the Gentiles, and the prediction minutely accomplished: "The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which

* Luke xxi. 24.

thou knowest not, eat up," ver. 33. Palestine, once the land of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and where the Son of God sealed the work of man's redemption with his own blood, is now profaned by the mosque of Omar, and by the dominion of the false Prophet. Of all forms of human misery no spectacle is more affecting, or appeals more powerfully to the sympathy of a Christian, than that of the Jew an exile in his own land. Every man has his home and his country, endeared to him by a thousand recollections, which no time nor distance can efface. But the Jew has no home nor country. Wherever he goes, the "heavens over his head are brass, and the earth that is under him is iron," (ver. 23.) What, then, must be his feelings in the land of his forefathers? Surrounded by objects reminding him of the past glory of his nation, and of the splendour of his temple worship, he is rendered more keenly alive to the consciousness of his present servitude and wretchedness. Nor is our sympathy less excited in witnessing groups of Jews assembling, on every Friday, at the Western Wall* of their former Temple, and there mourning over the desolations of Zion; or finally reposing with their ashes aro

* Josephus mentions this wall being preserved, by the order of Titus, "to afford a camp for such as were to be in garrison." See Book vii., chap. 1.

the tomb of Zechariah, in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

But these days of captivity and mourning will have an end. The persecutions at Rhodes and Damascus will probably be the last remnant of barbarous oppression prior to the restoration of the Jews.

We proceed, therefore, to consider—

III. The termination of “*The times of the Gentiles;*” *the judgments that will accompany this period; and the glorious event that will subsequently occur.*

The termination of this period is evidently to be inferred from the passage in Daniel, already noticed. When “the man,” represented in Daniel’s vision as “clothed in linen,” is asked “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” he first states their duration to be for “a time, times, and an half;” and then adds: “And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, *all these things shall be finished.*”*

In the same chapter, ver. 4, the Prophet alludes also to “*the time of the end,*” and to some indications which characterize it. The passage in Luke xxi. 24, is of similar import: “Jerusalem

* Daniel xii. 7.

shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*," that is, till the period allotted for their duration shall expire.

There is a corresponding declaration in Rev. x. 6, where the angel is represented as swearing "*That there should be time no longer.*" Mede understands this to be the termination of the time, times, and an half of Daniel, and not the end of the world ; because the context does not refer to that event, but to the blowing of the seventh trumpet, when "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."*

I have been thus minute in specifying these various passages, expressive of the termination of the period, because an impression prevails that the Gentile dispensation will be final and perpetual.

This persuasion is founded, most probably, on the passage in Romans xi. 25, that "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." This fulness being interpreted in a spiritual, instead of a temporal, sense, has given rise to the opinion that, in the order of events, the Gentile world will first be universally converted, and then the Jews brought in to grace

* Rev. ii. 15.

and close the glory of that dispensation. This view is at variance with the whole reasoning of the Apostle in Rom. xi. 12, 15, “ Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world ; and the diminishing of them, the riches of the Gentiles ; *how much more their fulness ?*” “ For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but *life from the dead ?*”

His object is to shew, that if the rejection of the Jews prove so great a blessing to the Gentiles, by conferring on them the privileges of the Gospel, how much greater will be the blessing resulting from their reception ? The effect produced is represented to be like a transition from a state of spiritual death to that of spiritual life, “ *life from the dead ;*” that is, instead of the nations of the world being previously converted, they will comparatively, as to the great mass of them, be spiritually dead ; from which state the stupendous event of Jewish conversion will be made the occasion of awakening them, and of imparting all the functions and energies of vital godliness.*

* Some persons have interpreted this passage as if it were intended to imply that the conversion of the Jews will be as “ life from the dead ” to *themselves*. But this construction is contrary to the spirit of the whole passage. The argument of the Apostle is not what this event is likely to prove *to the Jew*, but, its effect on the *Gentile* ; nor can any other interpretation be admitted, without violating the whole reasoning of the Apostle.

There is also a remarkable passage in Zechariah viii. 23, which is no less conclusive. Speaking of the period of Jewish conversion, the Prophet remarks : “ In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you ; for we have heard that God is with you.” Here is the proportion of ten Gentiles to one Jew, seeking communion with him, as the special object of the divine favour. The Jew is described, not in the act of going over to the Gentiles, but the Gentiles are represented following in the footsteps of the Jew.

It is, however, fully admitted that though the general conversion of the Gentiles will not precede that of the Jews ; still there will be an in-gathering of the Gentiles, to a certain extent, prior to the conversion of the Jews ; and that the preaching of the Gospel, “ as a witness to all nations,” forms a distinctive feature of the closing part of the Gentile dispensation. It is the gracious, yet solemn, proffer of mercy prior to the infliction of divine judgments. “ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people ; saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, an

give glory to him ; *for the hour of his judgment is come.*”*

We next notice the judgments which will accompany this closing period :

“ And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people ; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time ; and at that time, thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”†

This time of trouble forms the subject of frequent reference, both in the Old and New Testament, and is never introduced but with great solemnity of expression. It is called, “ God’s controversy with the nations :” (Jer. xxv. 31.) “ The great and the terrible day of the Lord :” (Joel ii. 31.) “ The shaking of the heavens and the earth :” (Joel iii. 16.) “ The day of the Lord :” (Zech. xiv. 1.) “ Signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” (Luke xxi. 25, 26.)

* Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

† Daniel xii. 1.

This period is also described as “the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain :” (Heb. xii. 27.) “That great day of God Almighty :” (Rev. xvi. 14.) “The battle of Armageddon :” (Rev. xvi. 16.) “Treading the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” (Rev. xix. 15.)

The connection of these commotions with the approaching deliverance of the Jews, is distinctly specified. “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads ; for your redemption draweth nigh.” (Luke xxi. 28.)*

In inquiring into the causes of these solemn judgments, we might remark, that under the Gentile dispensation three forms of apostacy or error have sprung up :—

* The fearful signs enumerated in this chapter are admitted by all the best commentators to have a primary and secondary interpretation ; first, a reference to the fall of Jerusalem, under Titus ; secondly, to Jewish deliverance and conversion. This latter sense is evident from the expression, “Your redemption draweth nigh.” The passage rendered by our translators, “This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled,” is manifestly erroneous ; because that generation terminated *not in the redemption, but in the destruction of the Jews*. It is now admitted that the proper and correct mode of interpretation would be as follows : “This generation shall not pass away till all these things *enter upon the commencement of their fulfilment*, running on continuously till their final accomplishment.

1st. The Papal Apostacy.

2d. The Religion of the False Prophet.

3rd. Infidelity, as revealed in these last times.

The first corrupts and persecutes the truth of Christ ;

The second usurps his Throne ;

The third denies his Divinity, and his revealed will.

But besides these more open acts of avowed apostacy and error, there is, among nations professing Christianity, much of nominal and mere external worship. For “ They are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” (Rom. ix. 6.) The great mass of Christians are “ walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”* “ The whole world lieth in wickedness.”† “ Men are captivated by the perishing things of time and sense :” “ Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God.” There is, indeed, a considerable increase of religion among all classes, and the Lord seems to be drawing a line of demarcation between the Church and the world, by the solemn calls of His providence, as well as by the preaching of His word. The present times may be characterised as the

* Ephes. ii. 2.

† 1 John v. 19.

season of great conflict. Truth and error, light and darkness, Christianity and infidelity, the world and the Church, are mutually arrayed against each other, and contending for the mastery. The Lord himself will decide the result by mighty judgments, and by awful interpositions.

“A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time.”

(Dan. xii. 1.) The circumstances of this solemn period are minutely described by Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.; and by the Prophet Zechariah xiv. It will be a time of great warfare. Palestine, or the Holy Land, will be the theatre of these operations : “I will gather all nations against Jerusalem.” (Zech. xiv. 26.) The Jews will have been previously restored, in an unconverted state ; and the drying up of the mystical Euphrates, or the approaching dissolution of the Turkish Empire—“That the way of the kings of the East* may be prepared,” (Rev. xvi. 12)—will facilitate that great event, and remove the barrier that has so long precluded their return. The nations confederate against Jerusalem are even specified, some of them by name ; and the Beast and the False Prophet are both represented as instrumental in forming this confederacy.† Among these nations stands

* The Jews.

† Rev. xvi. 14.

pre-eminent a northern power, designated by the name of Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. (Ezek. xxxviii. 2, 3.) “Thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land.”

Mahomedan powers, namely, Persia, Ethiopia, and Lybia, are specified as uniting in this league ; “all of them with shield and helmet : Gomer, and all his bands ;...and many people with thee.” (Ezek. xxxviii. 6.) The motives of the enterprise are described “to take a spoil, and to take a prey.” (ver. 12.) The extremities of the siege are unfolded with all its horrors, in Zech. xiv. 2. At this moment of terrible conflict and dismay, the Lord will interpose from heaven, and save his people with a great deliverance : “Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, on the east ; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west ; and there shall be a very great valley : and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” (Zech. xiv. 4.)

The conversion of the Jews follows, together with awful judgments upon their oppressors. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will

seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." (Zech. xii. 9, 10.)

I cannot further enlarge on this subject, without encroaching on the province of others.

The details of this great event—the fall of Babylon, and the destruction of the false Prophet; the manner in which the Jews will become a “crown of glory, and a royal diadem in the hands of the Lord;” the spread of the Gospel, and the establishment of Christ’s millennial kingdom throughout the world—will be unfolded by those who follow me. But it is impossible to contemplate the extraordinary character of these times, without a deep conviction that the accomplishment of God’s purposes draweth nigh.

May the Lord prepare us for so solemn a dispensation. May our “loins be girded,” and our “lamps be trimmed;” and may we “watch unto prayer,” that the day of the Lord may not come upon us unawares. In the review of all God’s dealings with his ancient people, and his future purposes of mercy towards them, may we be care-

ful to profit by those great lessons of wisdom which they convey to us, both as a church and nation. May we adore his manifold wisdom, righteousness, and truth; and exclaim, in the words of the Apostle: “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*” (Rom. xi. 33—36.)

THE
OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES

CONFIRMED BY

ZACHARIAH'S HYMN.

LECTURE VIII.

THE OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES CONFIRMED
BY ZACHARIAH'S HYMN.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM FREMANTLE, M.A.

MINISTER OF WEST STREET CHAPEL.

LUKE i. 76—79.

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest : for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways ; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God ; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

IN order to form a just estimate of the subject which is to occupy our attention this evening, we must take a large and comprehensive view of the covenant of salvation by Jesus Christ. We must stand on an elevated point; and survey from thence the great map of ages, in the length

and breadth of its mysterious existence, and study the intricate windings and chequered outlines of divine sovereignty. We must follow the tide of population emerging from Eden and Ararat, and regard the successive generations of men, as the surface upon which we are to concentrate our thoughts, while they flow onward, in anticipation of that glorious period, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."* By taking such a position we may trace the order and harmony of God's good will towards man, in the several dispensations of his grace from one generation to another ; we may see how he has constructed the mysterious and beautiful machinery of his church, which, in every part of its complicated movement, exhibits His infinite wisdom both in plan and execution. In one word, we mark the steps and progress of development from the first unfolding of the book of life to Adam, to the revelation of the mystery of Christ to the Gentiles. The whole has been a system of prophetic intimation ; not a stone was laid in the foundation, but it was typically connected with and prepared for, future design ; each moment was teeming with events of infinite importance

* Isa. xi. 9.

which, like the links of a mighty chain, were carrying onward into expanse the eternal purpose. We find that the work of grace has not been left to chance or accident: Jehovah "is not a man that he should repent,"* or change his mind. He has not grown wiser by experience, and accommodated his work to circumstances as they arose. Nor has he left the result to a peradventure, as if it were at the will of that which is created to frustrate the will of him that created it.

This were not to set forth his glory; but Jehovah has seen the end from the beginning: "his counsel standeth sure, and he will do all his pleasure."†

If then we review the history of mankind with reference to its different epochs, we shall recognize this principle in every stage. Each dispensation, whether Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Prophetic, has formed a distinct chapter in the volume of the eternal covenant; and has, step by step, prepared the way for that full manifestation of the love of God, which, as yet, we only see in part.

Now the interesting question before us is this: What part, in the great work of grace, is the Gentile dispensation destined to occupy? What are

* Sam. xv. 29.

† Is. xlvi. 10.

its peculiarities, its duration, and issue? These topics have been already brought before your notice, and it remains for me to pursue the subject in connection with the prophecy of Zachariah, and the ministry of John the Baptist.

Supposing then that the general outlines have been laid down, I will premise that we are to regard the Gentile dispensation as the breaking open of one of the seals of the great mystery of godliness. Its object is, during the unbelief of the Jewish nation, to set forth the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to gather in an elect people to His glory, “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”* It has also a particular reference to the Jewish people, who, as a nation, will obtain mercy through its mercy. In short, the Gentiles are grafted into the true stock of Israel, and “partake of the richness and fatness of the olive,”† but only as an intermediate branch in the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant, preparatory to the final glory of the nation.

The points which it is my desire to illustrate from the text, are these:—That the Gentile dispensation has special regard to the gathering out of a remnant, according to the election of grace, as the harbinger of the great day of the

* Luke i. 17.

† Rom. xi. 17.

Lord, when he shall return to Israel with mercy ; and consequently that it is not final.

The song of Zachariah confirms this view ; and that I may give a full and simple exposition of it, I would entreat your prayers for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that I may rightly divide the word of truth, and convey some profitable instruction to the congregation.

I will then, as the Lord shall enable me, shew,

I. THE CONNECTION OF THE TEXT AS IT BEARS UPON THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

And II. CONFIRM THIS VIEW BY AN APPEAL :

1. *To the harmony of the Scriptures.*
2. *To the typical illustrations in the Old Testament.*
3. *To the rise and progress of the Gospel, as given in the New Testament.*
4. *To the experience of the church up to the present day.*

I. THE CONNECTION OF THE TEXT AS IT BEARS UPON THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

It will be necessary that we should consider the particular position in which Zachariah's hymn stands in the canon of prophecy.

For nearly 400 years the voice of prophecy had been silent. The last words of Malachi awaited the indenture, by which the next prophet in the

church was to establish their solemn and momentous truth. That period had now arrived. The new era was at hand, in which the mystery which had been hid from ages was to be made known,* and the salvation of the Lord go forth unto the ends of the earth.† The manner in which this display of divine love was to be made, had been shadowed out darkly in ancient predictions. It had been the subject of prophetic song, that the Jewish nation would reject the grace of the gospel day, and see no beauty in the Beloved of the Lord; that the wall of partition should be broken down; the natural branch of Israel be cut off; and the Gentiles be admitted to a participation in the blessings of redemption.‡ But this had not been understood. There was a vail upon the heart of Israel, and although there were some few, who looked for the promised redemption, they saw but indistinctly the approach of the day of Christ, and therefore an immediate revelation was made from above. Hence a messenger from heaven appears to Zacharias, while he was burning incense in the holy place, and, standing on the right side of the altar, thus addressed him: “Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy

* Eph. iii. 9.

† Is. lii. 10.

‡ Is. liii. 1—3; lxv. 1, 2. Rom. x. 20, 21. Is. v. 5.

wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness ; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink ; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke i. 13—17.) Here, you will observe, the very words of Malachi are applied to the person and office of John the Baptist ; explaining more fully the character of his ministry. For this I believe to be their import. He shall come as the forerunner of the Messiah, in the spirit and power of reproof and correction. He shall convert many of Israel. He shall turn the hearts of the Jews whose are the fathers, and as being in Abraham the parents of the elect family, to the Gentiles, who were children as being in the entail of the covenant, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.* He was to take a peculiar and antecedent position—preparing the way for the

* See Polisynopsis and Matthew Henry, ad loc.

Gospel. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.* Now all “the prophets and the law prophesied until John;” but they spoke within the fence and boundary of Israel: a veil parted off the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim of glory from the public eye. But John was to come and shew that the blessings promised to Abraham belonged to Gentiles as well as Jews, and was to preach the doctrine of repentance, and administer the ordinance of Baptism. By the former he would bear witness to the light that all might believe on him that should come; and by the latter, shew, that the door of admission was equally open to Jews and Gentiles; for baptism under the Old Testament was allowed to Jewish proselytes; and we may here observe that John baptized Roman soldiers as well as Jews.† In his preaching therefore, and in his baptism, both were to be one. The hearts of the fathers turned to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; not to the Jewish fathers as Jews, but from ignorance and rebellion unto the God of Israel.

Such was the light which Gabriel threw upon

* Is. xl. 3. Matt. xi. 13.

† Luke iii. 14.

the prophecy of Malachi, and fixed for ever the harmony of the Old and New Testament. As though the last note of the Prophet's harp, finding no response on earth, had winged its flight to heaven; and vibrating from one to another throughout the choir of angels and of seraphim, passed, in the lapse of ages, to the lips of Gabriel, who, filled with glad delight, wafted the echo down to earth, and struck again the chord in mortal ear.

The fire had kindled in the bosom of the aged priest, but his lips, as a temporary chastisement for his unbelief, were sealed till the birth of his promised son. When this joyful event took place, and when his kinsmen were assembled to circumcise the child, and to give him a name, he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." Whilst they all marvelled, his mouth was opened immediately, his tongue loosed, and he spake and praised God. Filled with the Holy Ghost, he prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remem-

ber his holy covenant. The oath which He swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”*

Here it is delightful to contemplate the spirit of praise and joyful anticipation bursting from the lips of this eminent servant of the Lord. He seems to pass over the intervening events of ages, that he may at once give vent to the fulness of his heart. Salvation is the subject of his prophecy. Salvation by grace ; salvation by covenant engagement ; salvation by the Son of David ; salvation in the house of Israel : “Blessed be the God of Israel ; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.” In the gift of the long expected Redeemer he beholds the assured fulfilment of all the promises, the near arrival of the blessed days, when the posterity of Abraham, delivered out of the hands of their enemies, might serve the Lord with a holy service ; become, indeed, “the righteous nation which keepeth the truth,” their officers peace, their exactors righteousness, having “holiness to the

* Luke i. 68—75.

Lord upon the bells of the horses, and the pots in the Lord's house like the bowls upon the altar.*" Thus he magnifies the God of his salvation before he utters a single word in reference to his son. But this is not all. He fully confirms the declaration of the Old Testament, that it was through the seed of Abraham, the tribe of Judah, and the house of David, that the whole earth was to be blessed; and in looking forward to this event, he strengthens his hope in the budding of the stem of Jesse, the raising up of the horn of salvation in the house of David, that the long suspended promises to Judah and Israel would, at no very distant period, be accomplished. But events nearer at hand, and prior in the order of God's purpose, are to be detailed, and he breaks off to address his infant son in the words of my text: "And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Mark the words! they are the echo of Gabriel's

* Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

message, and demand a similar interpretation. 'Thou child shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, and shalt go before the face or presence of God manifest in the flesh, to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto his elect people, both of Jew and Gentile, through the tender mercy of God; whereby the day-spring, the first beams of the rising sun, the dawn of the day of glory, hath visited us Jews, in the appearing of the Redeemer not in power and great glory, but in weakness and humility, to extend light to the Gentiles, who sit in darkness in the shadow of death, and thus reflect the light of grace back on us, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' Such is the prophecy. It is scarcely uttered, before another man of God repeats the strain!

The aged Simeon, holding in his arms the consolation of Israel, adds: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Here, then, we have Malachi, Gabriel, Zachariah, and Simeon, united in one general statement concerning the dispensation of the Gospel to the Gentiles, which was to commence with the ministry of John the Baptist, and issue in the glory of Israel. He is to usher in the day of the Gentiles, *preparatory* to the great day of the Lord. He is

the light which precedes the rising sun, the star of Gospel promise, which guides Gentiles, princes, and senators to lay their precious offerings at the feet of Immanuel, and to rejoice with exceeding great joy.—I am,

II. TO CONFIRM THIS VIEW BY AN APPEAL—

1. *To the harmony of the Scriptures.*—And that I may not weary with many quotations, I will select those which, from their acknowledged connection with my subject, will serve as a key to the many other passages which I might adduce.

The first, then, to which I would beg to direct your attention, is the Song of Moses, in the 32d chapter of Deuteronomy, uttered nearly 1500 years before that in my text. Here, at a glance, is given the history of the Covenant, from the calling of Abraham to the restoration and final glory of Israel.

Vers. 8, 9 : “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is His people ; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” Here is a manifest reference to the promise made to Abraham :—“In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

But to proceed (in the 15th verse): “Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: (thou art waxed fat; thou art grown thick; thou art covered with fatness): then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of His salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods.” Here is Israel’s sin, rejecting the grace of God, and filling up the cup of their iniquity; for, at the 19th verse, we find, “When the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters; and He said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very forward generation, *children in whom is no faith.*” In such terms is the partial blindness which should come upon the nation described, and which is referred to by the Apostle in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. iii. But now observe the course which the Lord will adopt (ver. 21): “They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.” I will blight their branch for a season, and graft another upon the fruitful stock. I will call in the Gentiles, who shall receive the first rays of Gospel light, and then

return with mercy to Israel, when my purpose is accomplished in them; "for," (ver. 36), "the Lord shall judge His people, and repent himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left." He shall say (ver. 39), "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." "I will render vengeance to mine enemies;" and then, (ver. 43), "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will be merciful unto His land, and unto his people." The day-spring for the Gentiles, the Glory for Israel.

The next passage is in the 42d chapter of Isaiah; in which the Redeemer is described as commencing His work of salvation.

Ver. 1: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Again, in verse 6: "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." How similar to the words of Zachariah, and to the

previous prediction of Isaiah, referred to by Matthew at the commencement of our Lord's ministry. Mat. iv. 15, 16: "The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light: and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." After this, when the Gospel sound shall have reached the ends of the earth; then (vers. 13) "the Lord shall go forth as a mighty man; he shall stir up jealousy as a man of war; he shall cry, yea, roar. He shall prevail against his enemies:" and then (ver. 16), "I will bring the blind (Israel) by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." And lest there should be any doubt upon our minds, as to the order and precedency in this work, we have only to turn to chap. xlix., and we have it in detail; ver. 22, 23: "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers....

Thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Here then is Isaiah pursuing the same order. And we might trace a similar testimony in all the prophets. But I forbear—the great apostle of the Gentiles has summed them up in that remarkable chapter, towards the close of his Epistle to the Romans, (xv. 8—12, 16): "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the *fathers*; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust." Again, when St. Paul is speaking of his own office, he adds, "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." See how the inspired Apostle confirms the statements he has made in chap. xi.: "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles; for to provoke them to jealousy, and so all Israel shall

be saved.” See how he gathers in his arguments from the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, proving from the Scriptures the admission of the Gentiles, preparatory to the final glory of Israel. Let me ask then, Have Malachi, Gabriel, and Zachariah conspired to break the order of Scripture? God forbid! They follow the harmony of truth—the trumpet gives a certain sound, and each succeeding age makes it more explicit that the day-spring from on high hath visited the descendants of Abraham, to give light to the Gentiles, and thus to guide Israel’s feet into the way of peace.

2. To the Typical illustrations in the Old Testament.

Many typical representations are given in the Old Testament of the scope and character of the Gentile dispensation; from which I select the three following, as being more immediately applicable to the points proposed for our consideration.

(1.) *Noah*.—By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”* I notice in this the grace and mercy of God in raising up an instrument, in the midst of a dege-

* Heb. xi. 7.

nerate age, to gather out a remnant, and to save them in the great day of his wrath. Noah preached the righteousness of God for 120 years, "while the ark was a preparing;" but only seven persons were wrought upon to accept deliverance. Although his doctrine and his practice were consistent and faithful, and in direct contrast to the maxims and practices of the day, yet the multitude rejected the long-suffering of God, and ended in apostacy. And just such is the character, just such will be the issue, of the Gentile dispensation. For, saith our Lord, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the son of man; they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."*

(2.) *Moses*.—Was called of God to be a preacher of righteousness unto Israel, and to prepare the people for the possession of Canaan. He, by faith, esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of reward.† Accordingly, he led the people through the baptism of the Red Sea, and of the Cloud, into the wilder-

* Luke xvii. 26, 27, 30.

† Heb. xi. 26.

ness ; and there preached unto them repentance, and the remission of sins, by giving them the moral and ceremonial law : in the one, denouncing the curse against sin, in the other declaring the remedy. He then led them to the precincts of the promised land, and finished his course, with his eye resting on the purchased possession.* But of all that generation which left Egypt, only two entered into Canaan. Why was this ? “ Because of unbelief.”† And here again is a type of the remnant ; for the apostle argues thus, (Heb. iii. 5.) “ Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. For unto us *is* the Gospel preached as well as unto them ; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall, after the same example of unbelief.” Hence we may infer that the character and end of the dispensation will not be that of universal obedience and acceptance of the Gospel.

3. *Elijah*.—This eminent prophet was in like manner sent forth to reprove and warn the rebellious king and nation of Israel. His commission is established by mighty signs and wonders.

* Deut. xxxiv. 1—4.

† Heb. iii. 19.

The king and people hear him, and acknowledge the justice of his arguments, and the divine power which attended his work ; but the *nation* is not converted, although no doubt his ministry was blessed to *many*. We should have expected, after the sermon upon Mount Carmel, and the universal testimony given to the God of Elijah,* that all Israel would, with one heart and one mind, have turned unto the Lord ; but we have only to follow the prophet to Mount Sinai, and we hear his lamentation : “ I am very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away.” But what saith the answer of God unto him ? “ I have reserved to myself 7000 men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.”† Here again is an eminent type of the Gospel day—for so St. Paul applies it : “ Even so then, at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”‡ How manifest then is the correspondence between the work of Elijah and John the Baptist, and, if I may so speak with reverence, that of the Holy Spirit by His servants. “Why, then, say the scribes that Elias must first

* 1 Kings xviii.

† 1 Kings xix.

‡ Rom. xi. 5.

come? Jesus answered, and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things ; but I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Then the disciples understood that he spake to them of John the Baptist.”* The testimony of John is rejected by the mass of the people, and received by a few, who are the people prepared for the Lord ; so the Holy Spirit saith, “ To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”† “ For when He is come He shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. He shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and He will shew you things to come.”‡ As then Noah, Moses, and Elijah, did prepare the way of the Lord, by reprov- ing the world of sin, and gathering out a remnant according to the election of grace, so the Holy Spirit is now sealing the children of God, healing the broken-hearted, strengthening the weak, com- forting the feeble-minded, speaking peace to the burdened and heavy-laden, testifying of Christ, and making ready a people prepared for the Lord. But it is the forerunner of the day of glory !

It is the day-spring still !

* Matt. xvii. 10.

† Ps. xcv. 7, 8.

‡ John xvi. 13.

(3.) *The rise and progress of the Gospel, as given in the New Testament.*

The period of time implied by the Gospel day—or “the acceptable year of the Lord”*—I understand to commence with the ministry of John the Baptist, and to close with the second personal appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the ministry, therefore, of John the Baptist, our Lord, and the Apostles, we are to look for a practical comment upon what has been adduced. Come then, and see a plain man, with a raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins,† raising his voice as the ambassador of God in the wilderness of Judea. He is the son of the priest, and his mother was of the daughters of Aaron.‡ But he has put off the shadows of the legal ceremonial, and is now engaged in ushering in the substance: “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”§ He addresses himself to the multitudes which thronged around him without distinction, Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, whoever confessed their sins, were admitted by him to baptism. And while he gathers out a professing church, he declares the nature of that preparation of heart, without which none shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: “I in-

* Is. lxi. 2. † Matt. iii. 4. ‡ Luke i. 5. § Matt. iii. 2

deed baptize you with water unto repentance ; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner ; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.”* He describes the new birth ; the *individuality* of the work of the Holy Ghost ; the final judgment. And when he sees the Christ, he points out Messiah, not as the Jews expected, coming at that time to “ restore again the kingdom to Israel,” but as the meek and lowly Mediator : “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”† This is the true sacrifice ; this is the only blood which cleanseth from sin ; this the all-sufficient righteousness ; this the only atonement which is acceptable with God ; this is the gate of heaven,—this the way to glory. This is the day-spring of tender mercy which shall issue in the fulness of the risen glory. True, he had said, “ The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” But it was the kingdom of grace, preparatory to the kingdom of glory ; “ He must increase, but I must decrease.”‡ He had proclaimed this beyond the boundary of the Jewish courts, and Gentiles

* Matt iii. 11, 12 : Luke iii. 16, 17.

† John i. 29.

‡ John iii. 29. to end.

were pressing into it: the remnant was coming out, and the nation of Israel was ripening for judgment; "for the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John: but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized of him."*

Come next to the mountains of Galilee, and, on the margin of the peaceful lake, survey the little hamlets and their humble inhabitants. Follow the multitude up the grassy slope, to the mount of the Beatitudes, and pause a moment over the lovely scene. Here is Saffet, like a nest in the rock; "a city set on a hill that cannot be hid,"† white and glistening in the sun. Further on are ranges of dark blue mountains, casting a refreshing shade over the valleys of Nephtalim, dotted with flocks and herds; "full with the blessing of the Lord."‡ And in the distance, overtopping all, is the great peak of Lebanon, Mount Hermon, with its snow-clad summit, shedding around its genial dews; and all this reflected in the still bosom of the lake. O what silence reigns in this sequestered spot! It is, if I may be allowed the expression, the diocese of the Great High Priest and Bishop of our souls. Hear him speak as never yet man spake. He declares the same doctrine

* Luke vii. 29.

† Matt. v. 14.

‡ Deut. xxxiii. 23.

as his forerunner : “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” He has a work to do, “a baptism to be baptized with,”* ere he enters into his glory. He preaches the new birth ; the atoning sacrifice ; the electing and distinguishing love of God ; the coming glory ; and the same results attend his ministry. He came unto His own, and His own received him not ;” the Scribes and Pharisees reject His testimony, and seek to kill him. But when He went to the feast at Jerusalem, “certain believing Greeks said to Philip : Sir ! we would see Jesus. Philip and Andrew tell Jesus.—Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.”† Why ? because the Gentiles were inquiring after His salvation. He added, “Father, glorify thy name ; then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”‡ But he had not yet entered into His glory ; for as the time drew near, when He should be scourged, and mocked, and crucified, He checks the undue expectations of His disciples : “The Son of man shall come in the glory of His father, with His angels, and *then* He shall reward every man according to his works.”§ As He approached the apostate city, He pro-

* Luke xii. 50.

† John xii. 23.

‡ Isaiah xlix. 5, 6.

§ Matt. xvi. 27.

nounces her fall and rising again : “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, *till ye shall say*, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”* “ Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”† Then, as he assembled the little company of weak disciples at the last supper, he solemnly charged them with the same truth : “ I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, *until* that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”‡ Once more, he witnessed a good confession in the Sanhedrim. The high priest, enraged at his silence, said unto him : “ I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said : nevertheless I say unto you, *Hereafter* shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”§ Hear Him when the bitterness of death is passed. He has broken the

* Matt. xxiii. 37—39.

† Luke xxi. 24.

‡ Matt. xxvi. 29.

§ Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.

gates of brass and the bars of iron ; He has come forth in power, conquering and to conquer. He commissions his servants “to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature : he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ;”* and “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”† He remains for forty days, “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,”‡ and instructing them in their present duty. “Behold, a cloud receives him into heaven ; and two men in white apparel said unto them, This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

And now the day of Pentecost is fully come, the Holy Ghost is poured out to testify of Jesus, and sanctify the elect people of God. The Apostles preach Repentance, and remission of sins,—Jesus, and the resurrection. The day of acceptance before the day “of the restitution of all things, . . . when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”§ The multitude, both of Jews and Gentiles, are pricked to the heart ; three thousand are baptized, and Peter cries, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”|| He calls the sheep of the fold, who hear the shep-

* Mark xvi. 16.

† Matt. xxviii. 20.

‡ Acts i. 3, &c.

§ Acts iii. 19. 21.

|| Acts ii. 40.

herd's voice ; he enrols the disciples, and gathers out the remnant ; one is taken, another is left. The sovereign grace of God is with him, and " as many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed."* The word of the Lord has free course, and is glorified ; and believers are added unto the church, both of men and women. But it is the day spring !—the day of small things ; the first fruits of the harvest : for the number of converts does not exceed five thousand. The jealous Pharisees persecute ; the ignorant Gentiles glorified the word of the Lord. The Samaritans hear the glad tidings " and there was great joy in that city."† An Æthiopian believes, and is baptized ; and returns to Southern Africa, rejoicing as he journeys. The Roman Centurion believes, and is baptized with all his house ; and the Gospel passes into Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome. As individuals are converted, churches are planted ; and the little flock stands out as a light in the world, as the salt of the earth. Now the first council of Jerusalem passes its decree, confirming, by the voice of inspiration, the character of the dispensation. This assembly was convened for the purpose of deciding the hitherto unsettled point as to what standing the Gentiles should

* Acts. xiii. 48.

† Acts viii. 8.

have in the church of Christ : “ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”* Then after that Paul and Barnabas had declared “ what wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them,” James delivers his testimony as president of the council : “ Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, *to take out of them a people for his name*. And to this agree the words of the prophets ; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down ; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up : that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called. . . . Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.”—Thus the everlasting Gospel was made known, through the tender mercy of God, to the Gentiles ; and overleaping the fleshly bond of

* Acts xv. 7, &c.

circumcision, it was carried by the Spirit, upon the waters of baptism and the washing of regeneration, into the hearts of the elect, who were turned unto the Lord from every nation under heaven, and were looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the Son of man. O blessed view of the Gospel day, but still more blessed hope of the glory that shall follow! The corner stone, elect and precious, is laid in Sion, for a foundation. The Law and the Prophets are harmonized. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. The vail of partition is broken down, and the promise of the Father is shed forth, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Elect churches are planted in Asia, Europe, and Africa; and thus the faithful, both of Jew and Gentile, were as a dew from the Lord in the midst of many nations,* waiting only the full rising of the sun of righteousness to be gathered from earth to heaven,—there to swell the innumerable company of bright and blessed spirits, when “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, and come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.”†

* Micah v. 7.

† 1 Thess. i.

(4.) *I come now to the experience of the Church in all ages.*

For 1800 years the experience of the church of Christ has witnessed to the truth of my text. The sermons of John the Baptist, our Lord, and the Apostles, remain in full force: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The church still prays, "Thy kingdom come." The people of God still look for a city which hath foundations—a city and a rest yet to come. The time of the end has not yet arrived. It is the day-spring still!

No people have ever yet been converted bodily as a nation to the faith of Christ. The tares have been mixed with the wheat. The Jews, as a nation, have continued to oppose and despise the Gospel. Although a remnant, like the Apostles and Paul and Zacharias and Simeon, have, from time to time, been gathered out of Israel, and have waited for the promised consolation; yet the day-spring still hovers on the horizon in streaks of radiancy, ready to burst in glorious lustre on the world. There is light, but not glory yet. Christianity has made rapid strides, and thousands bear the holy name. Still the solemn truth remains, "Many are called, but few are chosen!" As all were not Israel who were of Israel, so all are not Christians who are of Christendom.

The number of true disciples is comparatively small, in the midst of the dense multitude, who, on the wide face of the world, are living without Christ, and without hope, and without holiness.

Blessed be God there is a true church—a hidden and secret church; and though despised, and weak, and few in number, yet it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."*

Here is light—yes, reflected light, glowing and pure; but it is very partial. There is antagonist darkness. O how dense and awful! The prince of this world still holds an usurping sway, and disputes every step with the hatred of desperation. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."† "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God—and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."‡ Yes, there is darkness too,

* Mal. iii. 17. † Ephes. vi. 12. ‡ Rom. viii. 19—23.

where once it was light ; a thick shroud of superstition and ignorance has fallen upon the places where the day-spring first appeared. Clouds have gathered in the horizon, and have veiled the hallowed spot with gloom and obscurity. Mark the place where Abraham offered sacrifice, in patriarchal faith and simplicity ; where Solomon dedicated the temple with regal splendour and abounding praise ; where Zacharias offered incense, and saw the vision of the Angel. How do ye see it now ! Here too the Holy Jesus “ was led as a lamb to the slaughter,” and here he will come again suddenly in the day of his power ! But “ the heathen are come into thine inheritance, O Lord ; thy holy temple have they defiled, and they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.”* It was here the day-spring dawned upon a dark world ; and here, though eighteen centuries have passed away, and the Gospel of the kingdom has been preached for a witness in all nations, yet Jerusalem is still a desolation, and the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. If indeed the kingdom of Messiah were very widely extended, and the spread and progress of it had been commensurate with its formal and nominal growth, we might pause for a moment to consider

* Ps. lxxix 1.

whether this dispensation were not like the march of a victorious army, which began its campaign with triumph, enlarged its border, and established its success wherever it planted its standard, and thus bid fair to extend its dominion over every country, every city, and every village, and bring under its subjection every single individual, ere it closed its glorious career. But oh ! how different has been the course of the Gospel ! Triumphs have been gained, but not according to man's judgment or calculation. " It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."* " Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."† Battles have been fought by the weak against the strong, and the few against the many ; and many a Jericho, many a Goliath, has fallen before the prayers of the faithful, and the valiant arm of the Lord. But the subdued Canaanite has remained in the land a spy and a traitor. Vantage ground has been neglected, or ceded without a struggle to the enemy. The standard has waved on many a mountain top, and thousands have flocked to pay their willing homage to its rule ; but the ardour of the conquerors has cooled ; luxury and worldliness have rusted their armour ; they have allowed the

* Rom. ix. 16.

† Zech. iv. 6.

banner to be wrested from them, and have deserted their post.

Look well, my dear hearers, over the sands of Asia, Arabia, and Africa. Here once the shepherds pitched their tents, and made their flocks to rest at noon ; but can you now trace the footsteps of the flock ? Here and there you catch the faint outline of the old paths ; but the wind has swept the track, and you strain your eye in vain for further evidence. Oh ! what a solemn lesson does the history of primitive Christianity teach us of these latter days. In all the branches of professed religion we seem to trace the sap of the Jewish olive-stock, but in how many sad aspects are they blighted, barren, and degenerate ! We see the great arms of the Eastern and Western church stretching out their boughs over sea and land ; but the wider their expansion, the less do they retain of beauty and productiveness. They have “left their first love,” “trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead.”* It is only in those closer shoots which hold the head, and are rooted and grounded in love, which partake essentially of the richness and fatness of the olive—those seedlings of the incorruptible word, planted by the Father, nourished by the Spirit,

* Jude xii.

and grafted into Christ, in which we find fruits and blossoms of Abrahamic faith, and which send back a rich current of blessing to the root, and thus prepare for grafting in again of the original people. It is in genuine religion—in the belief and practice of the pure Word of God by the Spirit, that we discern the true evidence of the Gospel day. It is in the light of the elect that the day-spring still beams upon the earth. It is here that true repentance, brokenness of spirit, lowliness of mind, and enlargement of heart, is found. It is here that due regard and love is shewn to Israel, and preparation made against the day of the Lord. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.”* Suffer me for a few moments to take you back to the history of the past, in illustration of this. Whence was it that black vapour of Mahomedanism arose which has obscured Christianity in the East? Whence, but from the impurities of decayed religion; and what has it not done to quench Christianity, and cut off root and branch of Israel from the earth. And what is it, but a mixture of Unitarianism, Judaism, and fable? a combination of fallacies, to make man a slave to his passions, and expel all true affection and love from the earth? Look at another dark exhalation of earthly principles in

* Rev. xxii. 17.

the Western church? what has it not done to seal up the Scriptures, mutilate the Liturgies, and murder the saints of the true church! What has it not done to exterminate the Jewish nation. And what is Popery but Christianity Judaized, without the essence or power of either. It is like the sucker of a fruitful tree, which has grown with surprising rapidity, and threatens to supplant its parent, but it bears no fruit unto perfection, and the curse of God is upon its barrenness.

God forbid that I should speak against individuals; I speak even weeping against a system. Look again at the churches of the East. Where is the candlestick which once shone in Antioch, Pergamos, Sardis, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Ephesus, and Laodicea? Lukewarm formality has succeeded to fervent zeal, and they still have a name to live while they are dead. What have the churches, which have branched out from them, done, to advance the kingdom of our Divine Redeemer? What does the past and present history of the Greek church tell of progressive Christianity? What is the condition of the Monophysite churches, both of Asia and Africa? The Armenian, Coptic, and Abyssinian? Is it not that of declension and decay? What shall we say of the wide-spread Syrian and Nestorian church? India, Persia, and Mesopotamia recognize in the disciples of Jesus

only the name of religious profession. But here I would draw a clear and decided line between these ancient scions of the Catholic church in the East, and that which has extended its border towards the West. Their course has been undoubtedly that of declension, but they continue still to hold by the essence of vitality; they still retain the supremacy of the Scriptures, and the authority of the creeds and confessions in the liturgies of the primitive church, and an independent episcopacy; and therefore, while we regard them with the deepest commiseration and love, we would distinctly recognise them as protesting against the assumed and usurped universal authority of any other church or bishop whatever. The Eastern churches, like the ruins of Palmyra and Balbec, still retain their native features of splendour and antiquity, and in the distance interest and awe the mind,—oh how deeply! It is when you approach to a closer examination you find the ravages which time and persecution have committed, and the heap of rubbish which has gone far to make confusion worse confounded. You may weep over the wreck of Christianity here! But in the Western church the case is reversed. There, instead of antiquity, we find innovation; instead of the deep and bold outline of a pure style, a mixture of modern invention;

instead of native material, a gaudy covering of untempered mortar; instead of clinging to the foundation, a departure from it; and instead of sitting in the dust mourning as a widow and looking up for help, sitting as a queen in all the splendour of her idolatry, fornication, and all abominations; so far from arguing that the progress of Christianity has been gradual and progressive, and that it is eventually destined step by step to leaven the whole world and every individual in it before the Second Advent of the Messiah, one would be tempted from such a reflection to follow the Apostle to the pulpit at Antioch, and address the Gentile Pharisees, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the *Jews*." The heart indeed is sad at the thought; the eye affects the heart when it enters the cave at Bethlehem! This is the birth-place! Yes! here, in this little village, "the day-spring from on high visited us." God was manifest in flesh. It was not in the dwellings of men, though in the nature of men. It was in a stable, and in the manger, that the Infant King was cradled. A gloomy cave received the first ray of light. Hither the star pointed. Here the Magi worshipped; stooping down in

wonder, the angels adored! Here Joseph and Mary united in praise to their Son and Saviour.* But how is it now? We should at least expect to see all Bethlehem filled with new born babes in Christ, desiring the sincere milk of the word, supplied with faithful shepherds tending their flocks by day and by night; and temples crowded with spiritual worshippers, walking in the steps of David. But how is it now? The star which shone so brightly in the heavens is only remembered by the flimsy tinsel on the pavement, which pilgrims pay to kiss! The prayers and praises of saints and angels give place to the disputes of sectaries, and the legends of monks; the light of faith is eclipsed by a treble row of dingy lamps, maintained at the expence of the three rival convents. And thus Bethlehem mourneth,—Rachel weepeth for her children, and will not be comforted, because they are not! But I must forbear—the subject is too large—the heart is too full.

Suffer a few words of exhortation. The day-spring from on high hath visited us! Thus said Zachariah, as he saw the promise in the distance, and embraced it. And what response does conscience make in our hearts. “From the days of

* Isaiah ix 6.

John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”* Sin-convinced souls press into it. The true Israel of God wrestle and prevail—they strive to enter in at the strait gate—they labour to enter into their rest. O what a holy, ardent, cheerful warfare do they wage; what a loving, zealous emulation do they put forth, that they may win the prize, and obtain the crown, and all because Jesus has loved them, and given himself for them. But are these common characters? Do they abound in our towns and cities? Are they the majority in our congregations? My beloved friends, it were a solemn question to ask even here, “Who is on the Lord’s side? Who!” This is a great day for profession, and much that passes current for religion has on the obverse the stamp and superscription of Cæsar. But we must be thankful that even this testimony is given to the purity and excellency of the Gospel, that it is counted worthy of imitation.—This is a great day also for atheism, false doctrine, lawlessness; and many there are who would dress up the old man with Heathen ethics and a sort of mechanical discipline, and thus attempt the moral regeneration of the world. Are these evidences of a great

* Matt. xi. 12.

spread of light in these latter days ; and if so little comparative progress has been made in this highly favoured country during 300 years, is there not a danger in holding out an expectation, that the day of the Lord will not come until all are converted ?

What have we seen from the mass of evidence which I have produced this evening as to the character of the dispensation in which we live ? Does it not speak in a voice of thunder, The kingdom of heaven is at hand ! Remember it was “ pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness,” which led to the destruction of Sodom ; it was pride of privilege, and resting in externals, which led to the rejection of Israel ! Be not then wise in your own conceits. Look at Israel—look and learn not to boast, “ for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not *thee*.”

Again : We have seen that the dispensation of grace in these latter times is not to nations but to individuals—one of a city, and two of a family. The whole field is purchased, yea, the whole may be ploughed up and sown ; but there will be tares and thorns to the very last ; and the angels, the reapers, will separate the one from the other in the time of harvest, when the wheat shall be gathered into the garner, and the tares be bound

in bundles for the burning! Oh, I beseech you, seek more and more to realize the individuality of religion. "To his own Master he standeth or falleth." In vain are you a member of a church whose faith is sound and Scriptural; in vain do you connect yourself with sects and parties; in vain do you enjoy the society of the excellent of the earth, if your *own heart* is not right with God!

Once more: What is the close of the Gentile day? Apostacy—"Perilous times shall come"*—Men shall deny the Lord that bought them—Men shall be scoffers, walking after their own lusts—blasphemers—disobedient to parents, without natural affection, traitors, heady, high-minded; and this too shall produce its effect on the professing church. "Then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another, and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."† Oh, what a startling, stirring motive is this! Is my Saviour near at hand! and am I lukewarm, faithless, sleeping, careless; am I on the verge of the coming glory; and am I content still to live as if I had no expectation of it? How can my heart be so dull and stupid, when such blessedness is so near! The

* 2 Tim. iii. 1.

† Matt. xxiv. 12.

more ungodliness abounds, the more let me be stirred up to make known the Saviour's name! for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed; the more I see the signs of the Son of man, the more may I lift up my head, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. Such reflections, dear brethren, instead of fostering a self-righteous spirit, and an undue dependence upon outward means, will lead to a lowly submission to Divine sovereignty, a loving obedience to commanded duty, and cheerful and happy reliance on the promised help; and that "hope which maketh not ashamed," and which is glorious and full of immortality, will animate every faculty of soul and body, and direct our hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ.

To whom, &c.

LECTURE IX.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE RESTORATION OF
JUDAH AND ISRAEL AT THE END OF THE
“TIMES OF THE GENTILES.”—THE SCRIPTURE
SIGNS OF THOSE TIMES DRAWING TO A CLOSE,
COMPARED WITH PRESENT EVENTS.

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LUKE XXI. 23, 24.

There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

It is by no trifling effort that the mind can grasp the range of thought suggested by the subject at present under our consideration; nor is it a light matter to consider the grouping of all the beings interested in our present assembling. I do not mean to allude only to the millions of the

family of Abraham, whose prospects we are endeavouring to trace out ; nor to that still more multitudinous crowd of our fellow creatures, the consummation of whose hopes or fears is linked with the crisis of Israel's fate ; but I would solemnly pause to realize the spiritual beings who, at this moment, are dwelling with a lively interest upon the progress of that general opening of Divine truth to the Church in the latter days, by which our thoughts are to be familiarized with the anticipations concerning God's ancient people, as part of the process by which those anticipations are to be fulfilled ; and I would call upon you all, my brethren, to remember, that while we are met to search the Scriptures, in order to discover the mind of God relative to his people Israel, we are surrounded by many a gazing group of those angels who have often been the messengers of Jehovah in his open intercourse with that people, and who are now the guard of honour, as it were, of the King of the Jews, of whose presence even here to-day, by His Spirit, we have the assured promise. May we each of us have the assured conviction of that divine presence ; that in the fulness of faith we may look to Him in the midst of us, to direct the instruction of his minister, so that it may be applied to each of the hearers in the demonstration of the

Spirit and of power. May God, for Christ's sake, give us the Holy Spirit.

The subject proposed for our consideration this evening is one, in the arrangement of which great difficulty will exist in condensing a sufficient amount of the essence of the matter into a statement of reasonable limits. But I desire it to be understood, that all I purpose to attempt is to mark those stations on the road of argument by which, under the Divine guidance, the mind may recognise the path to be pursued ; and that I consider each of the steps I propose to be but the occasion of suggesting to you much thought and Scriptural research, which must be carried on from the idea pointed out, in order that each may for himself arrive at a fuller result upon the subject. As it is a subject which confessedly has not drawn the attention of the Church, in former generations, with anything like its due proportion of interest, we are especially bound to enter upon it in a spirit of humility; for many treasures of truth may be expected to be revealed which had escaped a less attentive search than that made in the present day ; and also in a spirit of prayer, that we may be directed aright, both in the discovery of the truth, and in the application of it.

I purpose to bring before you, upon the present occasion,

I. SOME REASONS FOR MAINTAINING A CERTAIN EXPECTATION THAT BOTH PARTS OF THE GREAT FAMILY OF ABRAHAM—THE TRIBES OF JUDAH AND BENJAMIN, AND ALSO THE TEN TRIBES—WILL BE RESTORED TO THE LAND ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO THEM BY A DIVINE GRANT.

II. THE REASONS FOR EXPECTING THIS RESTORATION AT THE END OF THAT PERIOD, WHICH IS CALLED, IN THE TEXT, “THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES.” (Luke xxi. 24.)

III. SOME REASONS FOR CONCLUDING THAT THE EXPECTED PERIOD IS LIKELY TO BE NEAR AT HAND; DRAWN FROM A COMPARISON OF PRESENT EVENTS WITH THE SIGNS GIVEN IN SCRIPTURE TO MARK THE APPROACH OF THAT PERIOD.

I. SOME REASONS FOR MAINTAINING A CERTAIN EXPECTATION THAT BOTH PARTS OF THE GREAT FAMILY OF ABRAHAM—THE TRIBES OF JUDAH WITH BENJAMIN, AND ALSO THE TEN TRIBES—WILL BE RESTORED TO THE LAND ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO THEM BY A DIVINE GRANT.

In contemplating the first part of the subject, the mind at once pauses upon the great difficulty existing from the fact that now, for upwards of 2500 years, the Ten Tribes of Israel have not only ceased to exist as a distinct people, but that no satisfactory traces can be found of any one indi-

vidual of them. While this difficulty lies at the threshold of the argument, the consideration of it opens up the clue to the whole labyrinth of the Jewish subject, and places in our hands a key which may unlock every door.

In considering the past history of any people with a view to understand their present condition and character, or to anticipate their future probable course and destiny, conclusions are drawn in the mind according to the general laws by which the Almighty in his providence orders the events of nations. With respect to the destinies of nations in general, the laws of God's providence are bound up with the laws of nature—their principle is fixed—their application results necessarily in a certain course—the experience of ages has found them invariable. And though the secret direction of providential events has always been guided according to the will of God, so that it may truly be said of kings and of nations, "God putteth down one and setteth up another;" yet each manifestation of His sovereign will is ordered in the disposition of secondary causes which flow from the immutable principles established by the same God once for all. It depends upon the circumstance whether a Christian or an Infidel historian is stating the course of a nation's destiny, that the secret working of God's will should

be taken into the account at all, or not. The Christian historian would bring forth the evidence of the anger of God in permitting the scourge of the Mahomedan power, or the Papal persecutions; but each event, of either one or the other, resulted from immediate secondary causes, which acted according to the unchangeable laws of nature, so that the infidel historian, without any reference to God, might trace out their current upon the general principles which influence men and nations.

It must be plain, therefore, that in studying history, we can come to no safe conclusion, unless we are guided by a correct view of the general application of the laws by which God orders his providential dealings. But while there is one universal rule of providence, which immutably governs the agency by which God rules the destiny of all other nations of the world, it has pleased Him to make a marked exception in the case of that one nation whose prospects we are considering. As with all other nations, events run in the line of natural causes, and any interruption of their due order is a rare exception. With the Jewish nation the prominent working of their destiny has always been miraculous; and those events of any importance, affecting the whole people, which have been carried on entirely by natural causes, may rather be considered as the exceptions. God has been pleased to make a signal manifesta-

tion of his supremacy over nations, irrespective of the laws of nature, by choosing one nation from the rest of the world, which he has called into being as a nation, organized, conducted, preserved, punished, and carried through all the passages of a nation's history, *by his own hand*, without the necessary intervention of second causes—in many cases, contrary to the principles and laws of nature;—in a word, which he has governed, not upon the system of natural providence, as in the ordering of all other nations, but upon a system of *miraculous providence* peculiar to this nation alone.

Although the most rapid glance into the history of the Jews, with the most superficial knowledge of it, will justify this remark to the mind; yet the more minutely we examine into that history, the more striking this truth will appear. Other nations have grown up naturally, filling the land where their progenitors were born, or to which they migrated: the progenitor of the Jewish nation was taken, by direct revelation from God, from his birth-place to the country where he was to found a nation; but his family having been led to settle, as a few persons, in another land, was there reared into a nation; it was put out to nurse in Egypt; where, cradled in Goshen, the children of Israel grew alone; contrary to natural laws, they kept wholly distinct from the

people amongst whom they dwelt, until, matured for their miraculous destinies, the giant nation rose up, and gathered its hundreds of thousands for the march by the beacon lights of multiplied miracles wrought at the touch of a little rod in the hand of Moses. Here properly begins their history as a nation ; and what is the first act of the drama ? The whole people are caught by their enemies, where, according to natural laws, it is *impossible* they can escape. See them at Piha-hiroth—the chariots of Pharoah behind them—the rocks around them—the waves of the sea before them : “ Bid them go forward,” said Jehovah. Forward ! what, into the sea ? Yes ! for the nature of Jewish destiny is miraculous ; they went forward, and the sea rolled away at their approach.

But whither did they go ? Into a howling wilderness, with neither cultivation nor water. It was *impossible* that a vast nation should subsist in such a desert. When we use the word *impossible*, it is a term relative to the constitution of natural causes ; but in a miraculous system of providential arrangement, it has no proper meaning. For the Jews, the parched desert flowed with water ; for the Jews, the order of natural production was reversed, and not the earth, but the heavens yielded their bread ; the garments of the Jews waxed not old, and *their* feet swelled not. This

was but the result of the miraculous system of which it pleased God that the people of Israel should be the object.

One point is above all others remarkable in this matter. Under a system of such singular mercy, the Jews afforded the plainest evidence of the deep corruption of human nature, by their repeated and aggravated rebellion; yet Jehovah never altered the plan he had laid down for himself, of governing the people by miraculous interposition. When at any time his just anger burst forth, its torrent flowed in a miraculous course, contrary to the usual current of secondary causes—the earth opens—fire comes down from heaven—their enemies triumph over them upon the failing of the outstretched arms of Moses. No iniquity of their's alters this peculiarity in the dealings of God with them, though their conduct determines whether his miraculous power be exerted for weal or for woe.

Trace the march of this nation to possess its miraculously appointed territory. The waters of Jordan are released from the laws of nature on their behalf; the walls of Jericho no less miraculously refuse to be impediments to their progress: see how they enter upon the promised possession under Joshua; what unceasing tokens are given that they are under a miraculous system of Provi-

dence. As long as we are guided in their history by the light of the ancient oracles, there is scarcely a prominent event which does not convey some token of God's immediate hand and almighty power. And when that lamp is eclipsed by the brighter blaze of New Testament light, we find that the very purpose of the Gospel story is to tell of the miracle of miracles—compared to which, all other indications of God's power are but as shadows to this substance—the birth of the Son of God in the flesh of David. That this surpassing manifestation of Divine power, God manifest in the flesh, may be claimed as pertaining, in its results, to all the world, does not interfere with its native Jewish character; but it rather magnifies the miraculous character of the providential system under which the Jews lived, that the Saviour of the world should be born of a daughter of David.

The last act of their eventful history which has yet been developed, is a climax of miraculous interposition. Vast as was the power manifested in the entire suspension of the laws of nature for a whole day, when the sun stood still to enable the Jews to achieve their victory over their enemies, it was not more astonishing than the constant inversion of the natural principles that influence men, which has continued for 1800 years, in order

to maintain Judah as a nation.. A people scattered and peeled, meeted out and trodden down ; with no central point of attraction ; no polity or political union ; with every possible motive which should act upon their interest and their feelings for renouncing their creed ; heartless in their profession of that very creed they cling to, even with all its consequences of ignominy and separation from other people ; blinded by a thick film of traditional error, so that neither their Talmudical, nor their Reformed faith contains one beam of the brightness that might enkindle a glowing heart into chivalrous self-sacrifice for the ancient glory ; generation after generation receiving at every man's hand the measure of scorn and mockery that their forefathers had meted out to Him who "tasted death for every man:" yet this people, contrary to all the principles that are found to influence human character, dwell still alone as a nation, as the mouth of Balaam declared in their very beginning they should do. This is a continuous miracle, the sight of which has brought conviction to the mind of infidels, and has bowed down the understanding of the proud ; and I point to it now to confirm the proposition that the whole system of God's dealing with the Jewish nation is one of *miraculous providence*, as contrasted with the providence of natural causes by

which He influences the destinies of all other nations.

If this be established as truth, it follows necessarily, that whereas it would be unreasonable to anticipate that the future course of events with other nations should be contrary to the laws which govern second causes, it is quite reasonable to expect that the future course of events for the Jewish nation will be miraculous. Nay more: by the analogy of God's dealings with them hitherto, (even up to the present moment, when their very existence, as a nation in dispersion, makes every Jew a witness of the reality of this miraculous system,) it would be unreasonable to suppose that from henceforth their national course would descend from its high, its heavenly meteor-like character, to follow the earthly and ordinary path of all other nations, which are bound, as by natural gravitation, to the processes of second causes. Even if the Book of Prophecy contained no word to direct the watchful eye in tracing their probable course, it would be the inference of just judgment to expect that the future history of the Jews would be fraught with tokens of the mighty magic of Jehovah's hand.

While this seems to be the logical result of the argument, it suggests also an important caution by way of corollary. Within the known

boundaries of a defined limit, it may not be presumptuous to range: the laws of nature *have* defined limits, which may be known; and hence it may be within the capacity of man to say that certain results are possible or impossible—may or may not occur in the future history of the Gentile world;—but who can measure the unfathomable resources of the Eternal Mind? how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor? To anticipate by what possible impossibilities it may please God to carry on a system of miraculous interposition—not one single past step of which could have been preconceived by any man as to its mode and manner of execution—this is a waste of the powers of mind, and a venturous roaming into the region of speculative religion, which must be attended with many dangers, and is exactly opposed to the state of mind that the contemplation of such a history ought to produce. The legitimate effect upon a Christian mind should be, to draw off the attention from the detail of second causes, and to excite a more earnest and prayerful watchfulness in waiting upon the throne of God himself. If we are authorised to expect miraculous interposition as the rule of the Jewish destinies, we are

led by that expectation to wait upon God till he stretch forth his arm, and shew his power. For instance, speculations as to *how* the ten tribes are to re-appear, in order to their restoration, must be as utterly useless, and may be as dangerous, as an attempt to navigate the vast ocean without a compass or the sight of a star.

Our anticipations, then, with respect to the Jewish nation, must depend entirely upon any prophetic indications of His will, which God may have been pleased to afford us; and any approach to certainty, with respect to those anticipations, must be proportioned to the plainness of such prophetic indications. But here unhappily the ardent mind, intent on tracing out the wonderful destinies of God's people, receives a check from the tone of uncertainty infused into the prophetic songs of Israel by the system of interpretation adopted by many of the children of God. It does not belong to this portion of the general subject to examine into the basis of this system; and it would take us at present out of our way to inquire how far that system may have arisen for want of applying the argument, just now brought forward, to the prospective history of the Jews. It may be questioned whether, if our venerable and venerated fathers in past generations had not limited their expectations regarding unfulfilled prophecy to

the range of *possibilities*, they would ever have forsaken the manifest primary meaning of prophetic announcements, and substituted, as the first purpose of the Scripture, that which naturally would seem only to be the sense for a secondary application. This, I say, may be questioned, but we will not discuss the question at present; and I only refer to it in order to state that the check thus produced, makes it necessary to lay aside a vast number of prophetic declarations, which, taken in their simple and literal meaning, would obviously cast a very plain light upon the future history of the Jews; but the beams of which are intercepted in that direction by the habit of receiving them only in the sense of a spiritual application to the church of Christ.

Without calling to our aid any of these intercepted passages of Scripture, there are still many portions of Old Testament prophecy which must be received in their literal sense, because they cannot, by any extension of critical licence, be accommodated to fact, unless taken in their literal meaning. A reasonable anticipation of the restoration both of Judah and Israel to their land may be drawn from these passages, which cannot be challenged; an anticipation so reasonable, that it might be maintained in argument, as a matter of certainty,

if no other certain ground were at hand. But as that certainty may be ascertained from the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his Spirit in the New Testament, I will do no more on this part of the subject, than refer you to some specimens of Old Testament prophecies, which cannot be interpreted to mean other than the literal restoration of the Jews, and re-establishment of Jerusalem; and especially the future existence, in a restored condition, of the ten tribes of Israel. In doing this, the difficulty lies in the selection from the great number which are to be found.

The eleventh chapter of Isaiah occurs at once to the mind.

“ And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also

of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry-shod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.” (ver. 10—16.)

If the 10th verse did not sufficiently characterise the Gospel times, the point of date would be settled by the reference made in the Epistle to the Romans (xv.12.), where the passage is quoted as referring to that period. This being ascertained, it follows, that in verse 11, *in that day*, refers to the same times of the Gospel dispensation, and that it cannot therefore allude to the return from Babylon; this is further proved by the recovery of the remnant of the people being

said to be *again the second time*. The Christian church (to which the figurative rules would apply it if it were possible) had never been gathered a first time. This “remnant of his people” therefore cannot mean Christians. The literal people of God, the Jews, had already been gathered from Babylon ; and therefore, when they shall be gathered once more, it will be again the second time. Then follows a particularizing of places and circumstances, which will not admit of the application of the spiritualizing system of interpretation ; and especially as it contains a distinct reference *to the outcasts of Israel*, as well as *the dispersed of Judah*, placed in contradistinction as the two portions of the Jewish family—all to be done after the establishment of the Gospel dispensation ; and, as it has not yet been accomplished, all therefore remaining to be accomplished.

Although your attention has been previously called to the riches of the promises as developed by the prophet Isaiah, yet I must refer you to one more passage of his word, (Isaiah lxi. and lxii.) The opening of the 61st chapter was read by our Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth, to the middle of the second verse ; when he closed the book, and said, “ This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” (Luke iv. 18 — 20.) So far as he read, it was

then fulfilled ; but he did not read of “the day of vengeance of our God,” which yet remained to be fulfilled. The subsequent portion of the chapter relates to events to take place subsequently to that part which only was then fulfilled ; but they have never yet been fulfilled, and therefore remain to be so. “And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen, and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord ; men shall call you the ministers of our God : ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall you boast yourselves.” (ver. 4—6.) That the building of the old wastes, the raising up of former desolations, and the repairing of waste cities, have not a primary spiritual application to the Church of Christ, may be concluded from a circumstance not uncommonly overlooked by those who follow that system of interpretation. It is plainly necessary to establish such a view of the meaning of any passage, that the spiritual metaphor should be consistent and intelligible. Now while it may be easy to assume that Zion is used only metaphorically for the church, and not literally for the Mount of Jerusalem ; and that by Israel is

meant the children by faith in Christ, and not the children of Abraham according to the flesh,—it is not always easy to trace out an intelligent meaning for such a passage consistently with the metaphor. This is most striking where the Gentiles are spoken of in contradistinction from Israel. If Israel means Gentile Christians in a passage where universal peace and prosperity are promised, what is intended in the metaphor by “the Gentiles” as contrasted with Israel. It cannot be applied to unchristianised persons; for the hypothesis supposes the promises to Israel to intend such an extension of Christianity as leaves no room for unchristianised persons to remain on earth. In the 61st chap. of Isaiah, if the promise be not literally to the Jews, but if it be metaphorically to the Christian Church, which thereby must be taken to exist at the time in its enlarged prosperity, who are *the strangers* that are to feed the flocks, and *the sons of the alien* that are to be the servants? who are *the Gentiles* whose riches are to be eaten, and among whom the seed is to be known? If indeed these mean the nations of the world which shall be existing when the Jews shall be restored, then there is no difficulty whatever in the passage. But then also the promises must be taken to apply to the Jews literally; and being dated by our Lord himself as subsequent to the period of the Gospel

dispensation, and being yet unfulfilled, they justify our anticipations of a literal restoration yet to come.

But this passage, thus understood, is more important still, in connexion with the 62nd chapter, which is the continued word spoken prophetically in the name of the Anointed One, and ratified personally by Jesus as the Christ, who at Nazareth settled its chronology. Who can hear the voice of the all-prevailing Mediator crying, “For Zion’s sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth,” (ver. 1.)—who can hear this and doubt of the future glories of Jerusalem? Who can hear his promise, “Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken: neither shall thy land be termed any more desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married,” (ver. 4.)—and not look forward to the teeming earth of the re-fertilized Canaan? And shall I not add, who can listen to his commanding call: “Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth,” (ver. 6, 7.)—who can hear this, and not give vent to the ready echo of the Saviour’s voice in earnest intercession before the throne of the God of Abraham, of Isaac,

and of Jacob, in behalf of his yet desolate heritage? May the Spirit of Jesus warm our hearts with fervent sympathy, that we may ever be “the Lord’s remembrancers” in this matter.

Though I fear to occupy too much time on this portion of the subject, I must make some references to the prophecies of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a prophet of Judah, and prophesied at least sixty years after the entire destruction of the kingdom, and removal of the children of Israel (or Ephraim, the ten tribes) from the country of Samaria. Yet no prophet has spoken more distinctly of the restoration of that people, as well as of the people of Judah. They have never re-appeared as a nation from that time to this, and therefore the word of Jehovah is pledged to the fulfilment of the promises made by him through the mouth of his servant Jeremiah: “And the Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith

the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north, to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.” (Jer. iii. 11—18.)

The prophet has occasion to shew that the then existing people of Judah were more sinful than the *already destroyed* people of Israel; and then he issues a proclamation in the name of Jehovah, calling, not Judah, but Israel from the north, and promising their restoration: “I will take you, one of a city and two of a family, and I will

bring you to Zion;" and the proclamation is closed by a distinct statement, that in those days of restoration, Judah and Israel shall walk together: "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north, to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers," (ver. 18.) Has this in any sense received an accomplishment?

Again, in the 23rd chapter, a prophecy is given of the establishment of the reign of the righteous branch of David. In this prophecy, Judah and Israel are so distinguished that the words can only apply to the divisions of the literal family of Abraham after the flesh. These are said to be gathered out of the north country, and from all countries whither God had driven them; which affords evidence that the restoration from Babylon could not be intended. The prophecy, then, remains to be fulfilled in a yet future restoration of the whole family of Abraham to their land.

Yet one more: I would entreat you to remember that at the time when the 31st chapter of Jeremiah was written, Israel was in the state in which it has been ever since, and now remains. The whole chapter is a full and varied prophecy of the restoration of both Judah and Israel: so varied, that I cannot conceive an interpretation which will suit with the words used,

except that which declares the literal restoration of the Jews. In the first nine verses, Israel, Ephraim, and Samaria are mentioned in a manner to distinguish the ten tribes with sufficient clearness from the house of Judah; and from the 27th verse onwards, both are mentioned together. The sum of the prophecy may be gathered from verse 4 to 6: "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God." This sixth verse seems written as if to make it perfectly plain that the miserable mixture of a race that inhabited Samaria, in our Lord's time, could not be intended; as some have ventured to consider them a sort of restoration of Israel, in order to justify a strained system of interpretation: for what Samaritan ever cried, "Let us go up to Zion?"—certainly no inhabitant of that village where John and James desired to act the Elijah.

Thus have I shewn the grounds of our expectation from the Old Testament, by reference to a

few out of many passages of which those mentioned are only specimens. But it may be considered that the seal of certainty was affixed to the warrant for this anticipation by our Lord himself; and to this point I will now hasten.

There are two statements made by our Lord Jesus Christ, which seem to warrant a certain expectation that the Jewish family will be restored to their high place amongst the nations, and to the inheritance of their land. One is to be found in the remarkable prophecy which Jesus delivered upon the Mount of Olives, and the other in Acts i. 6, 7. The former passage is so intimately connected with the second point of our subject, that it will more properly be considered under that head, and will serve as the connecting link of the two divisions: we will therefore confine ourselves at present to the passage in the Acts: “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.”

The great sacrifice had been completed, and the great conquest achieved; death had received its prey, and been vanquished in its victory: but the enlightening life-giving Spirit had not yet been

poured forth to apply the power of the triumph. In this interval the Jewish Apostles, yet essentially and exclusively Jewish, having no notion of spiritual interpretations irrespective of literal promises, came to the risen Jesus with this natural, and, to a Jew, most important question, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The assembled Jewish disciples never had a doubt as to the literal fulfilment of the prophetic promises to their nation: they never suspected them to have been already sufficiently fulfilled. The resurrection of their Lord had now convinced them of his power, as of his Messiahship; and the only question then to be resolved was as to *the period when* He, the now proved Messiah, should exert that power in the realising of those never doubted promises. To this only point the Lord addresses his reply—a reply which withholds information on the subject proposed, but still a reply addressed to that point; and one which, being confined to that alone, fully justifies their anticipations both as regards the prophetic promise, and his own power to perform it. The reply, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons," leaves the warranted impression that the promise and the power had been correctly understood. A mistaken application of an acknowledged Scripture was immediately cor-

rected when brought forward by the Sadducees. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God," was our Lord's reply in that case; and with this instance of readiness in rectifying the errors of his enemies, can it for one moment be supposed that Jesus would leave his own disciples under such a mistake as that in question. The argument so triumphant against the Socinian heresy, when applied to another doctrine, bears with equal power upon the present point. Whatever doubts, respecting the proper divinity of our Lord and his equality with the Father, may be insidiously conveyed by a critical neutralising of the power of plain words, no doubt can exist that our Lord suffered the Jews to take up stones and stone him for blaspheming, because he made himself "equal with God," by uttering the words which we receive in the sense in which the Jews received them, and which the Socinians wrest to another meaning. Who that has ever trembled under Socinian subtilties has not rejoiced in the conclusive comfort of finding that, to be even an honest man, Jesus could not have allowed them to proceed in their sin under a false impression, which one explanatory word from Him would have removed? This argument is of equal power in the present case, though the subject matter is not of equal importance. His words left his

disciples bound up in the conviction that those glorious anticipations for Jerusalem were real and literal, which, upon the contrary hypothesis, would be nothing but delusive dreams and fairy fancies, as dangerous as they would have been idle. No, my brethren, this could not be ; and so our Lord's answer may leave a moral certainty upon our minds, that the kingdom shall be restored again to Israel in the sense in which the disciples expected it, however difficult it may be to ascertain the times and the seasons.

It may not be unnecessary to illustrate this argument by a familiar case. Suppose any of us held a bond, the obligation and condition of which were definite, giving us personally an interest in the payment of a large sum of money, while the *period* of payment was undefined. Suppose we presented the bond to the authorised executor of him by whom it was signed, and applied for information as to when the amount would be forthcoming. If that authorised executor were to answer this application, by saying that he was not able or not bound to state the period of payment, should any doubts ever have arisen in our minds, would not such a reply confirm our conviction, that at all events the *covenant* of the bond was valid and sure, however distant its fulfilment ? And to carry the illustration further out—if any sub-

sequent objection were to be made to our claim under that bond, and a legal decision resorted to, would not such an answer, so given by the authorised agent, when proved in evidence, be considered good in law as an acknowledgment of the claim, and as justifying, so far, a decision in favour of the claimant. I can anticipate but one answer, and that which leads us to the settled conclusion that Christ Jesus has thus acknowledged the literal claim of Israel to the yet unfulfilled performance of the covenant made by His Father with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

II. To establish the certainty of this point, an appeal might further be made to the statement of the Apostle Paul, in Rom. xi.; but to take in the whole scope of that important passage, we should require to examine more at large than time will at present allow; we will therefore proceed to consider THE REASONS FOR EXPECTING THAT THIS RESTORATION OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE END OF THAT PERIOD WHICH IS CALLED IN SCRIPTURE "THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES:" which part of the subject will be suitably connected with the former, by the examination of some portion of the prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ, delivered upon

the Mount of Olives immediately before his final sufferings: and which will equally tend to prove further that certainty of the restoration of the Jews we have already, as I trust, established upon Scriptural grounds.

I take it for granted, that in the Lecture of the past week (which I had not the privilege of hearing) the subject of “the times of the Gentiles” was so far explained, as to make it unnecessary for me to occupy you in examining the meaning of the phrase. It may be sufficient for me to state, that whether the word “times” be taken technically for a fixed number of years, or generally as synonymous to *period* or *season*, the phrase “the times of the Gentiles” expresses that length of time during which the promises to the Jews are suspended, in order (using the words of St. Peter and St. James, Acts xv. 14) that God might “visit the Gentiles to *take out of them* a people for his name.” I make use of these words of the Spirit for the purpose of contrasting strongly the purpose to which “the times of the Gentiles” are devoted, with the purpose (as regards the Gentiles) to which the period of the restored kingdom of Israel is devoted. During the one, the Jews are dispersed, scattered, and peeled; meted out and trodden down; and God visits all the other nations by his Gospel and His Spirit, to *take out of them* a peo-

pie for his name. During the other, the Jews are restored—their land married—their names named the priests of Jehovah : and, as we have seen from Isaiah, they shall be known amongst the Gentiles, and eat the riches of the Gentiles, (Is. lxi. 6, 9), and all nations shall flow to them.

Taking this as the meaning of the expression, we are led to expect that the literal restoration of Judah and Israel, which we anticipate with certainty, will take place at the close of the period in question : and to shorten the argument, we will pass over all the less evident and more deductive reasons for this opinion, and examine at once our Lord's statement in the prophecy upon the Mount of Olives.

A great deal of unnecessary difficulty has been ascribed to that important Scripture, for want of an accurate distinction between the portions which prophesy of the destruction of Jerusalem, and those which speak of the coming of the Lord. From these difficulties, however, the immediate point now before us is exempt ; since the particular passage it will be necessary to examine, is allowed on all hands to have a distant reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, this may be taken as a postulate in the argument.

The prophecy in question was delivered privately to four of the disciples, and is reported by

three of the Evangelists. It should be remembered that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel for the information of Jewish Christians, to whom all explanation of Jewish references and expectations would be unnecessary; while on the other hand, St. Luke wrote his Gospel for the use of Gentile converts unacquainted with the peculiarities of Judaism; and therefore, as might be expected, information concerning Jewish matters is given with more of detail. To this circumstance we owe the bright beam of light, which a comparison of the two accounts given of this prophecy severally by Matthew and Luke, casts upon the important subject before us.

St. Matthew tells us, that, after giving some practical directions for the conduct of his disciples upon the occasion of the then forthcoming siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, our Lord said, "For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor never shall be." (Matt. xxiv. 21.) Our Lord was speaking to Jews, and Matthew was reporting to Jews. To the Jewish mind this mention of a tribulation greater than any since the beginning of the world would, without further explanation, naturally suggest a comparison with all the afflictions which had befallen their nation, since it was a nation, from the Egyptian bondage to the exist-

ing Roman tyranny ; and the anticipation of a tribulation greater than any of these would have pointed at once to that prophesied dispersion into “all countries,” to “the north, and the south, and the east, and the west,” of which the afflictions in Babylon were but a type and foretaste ; and from which they were ultimately to be gathered. Had the Gospel been published only for the ears of Jews, this statement would have been sufficient to convey the full idea ; and as St. Matthew reported for Jewish ears, he stated no more. Our Lord, however, was about to command, that the Gospel should be preached to all nations ; and therefore he added that which carried out the Jewish idea for the information of Gentile minds ; and St. Luke, writing for Gentiles, reports the whole detail of that “great tribulation.” The parallel passage in Luke (xxi. 22—24) gives our Lord’s paraphrase of that condensed expression thus : “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days ! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations : and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of

the Gentiles be fulfilled.” According to this paraphrase the whole period of the great tribulation is made up of the days of vengeance, during which all God’s prophetic denunciations against his people Israel are to be acted out and fulfilled. The deep cauldron of God’s wrath, which boiled over at the Roman siege of Jerusalem, was to be poured forth, and utterly emptied. Not a curse conditionally declared and meritoriously due—not a single announcement of affliction, dispersion, and disgrace, but is comprehended in the “all things which are written” of those days of vengeance. St. Matthew’s account might leave the Gentile reader in a forgetfulness of the parties spoken to, and therefore of the circumstances intended. But our Lord guards against this through St. Luke ; for he gives us a special declaration, that the fulfilment of these terrible prophecies referred to was to consist of great distress *upon the Jewish land*, and wrath upon this *the Jewish people*. Then he particularizes, by a reference to the awful beginning of that fearful tragedy, as well as to its wearisome continuance ; specifically noticing it with reference to the prophecies of the general dispersion which are so frequently contrasted by the prophet with the bondage in Egypt, and the captivity in Babylon. He says, “They shall fall by the edge of the

sword." This describes the massacres in which a million and a half of Jews were sacrificed by the Romans. He adds, "they shall be led away captive into all nations." This describes the general dispersion which has continued uninterruptedly for eighteen hundred years.

I do not apprehend that any difference of opinion can exist as to the plain intention of this prophecy, nor as to its literal fulfilment. The reference to prophecies past ; the special limitation to the Jewish land, and the Jewish people ; the description of the bloody massacres of the siege of Jerusalem ; and the distinct statement of the dispersion *into all nations*, so often the subject of previous prophetic anticipation ; all these place us on a platform above the reach of critical difficulty, in order calmly to consider, and apply without the interruption of doubtful interpretations, the remaining part of the expression, that "great tribulation."

Our Lord proceeds to declare a circumstance characterizing this whole tribulation, and which is especially distinguished by a note of time: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The characteristic feature of the great tribulation in its whole duration is, that Jerusalem is to be trampled under foot by nations that know not

God. In whatever sense the treading down be taken, most completely has this prophecy been fulfilled. The royal standard that floated on the towers of Zion has been lowered. Jehovah no longer visits the place where His honour dwelt; and while the flag-staff is bare, and the King is absent, the people are given over a prey to His enemies. But the note of time points to the door of hope. This foreign possession of the city of God's people is to last *continuously*, but not *perpetually*—it is to go on UNTIL.——This little word makes the prophecy of the tribulation nothing but the thick incrustation of a curse that encircles an assured blessing—the superincumbent mass that lies over a substratum of gold.

It is extremely important that we should define to ourselves the full power of the adverb *until*, which in the loose habits of colloquial language is seldom done. It is rendered “*to the time that ;*” it expresses, first, uninterrupted continuance; in connexion with, secondly, entire cessation. Many circumstances make us feel its power, when applied to subjects interesting to our personal condition. “You will be in pain *until* to-morrow,” says your physician. How the certainty of the pain of every hour of to-day makes you long for the equally certain anticipation of ease to morrow; “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles !

until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." As certainly as this expression declares a continuous state of subjection, so certainly also it declares an entire freedom, when the period marked and measured by the adverb *until* shall have been completed. An occasional subjugation of Jerusalem, interrupting from time to time the Jewish supremacy there, would never be supposed to fulfil this prophetic declaration of our Lord. Neither would an unceasing possession by Gentile people fulfil it, how many ages soever it should endure. To make this prophecy true, the treading down of Jerusalem must cease,—and cease precisely when the period shall be completed which has been marked out by God, during which he visits the Gentiles, to *take out* of them a people for his name, "For Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

And here I would observe, with reference to our former point, that this word of Jesus Christ is positively decisive of the literal restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem, as a people possessing the land. No one attempts to interpret this prophecy figuratively—no one ventures to imagine that it has ever had anything like a shadow of an accomplishment—no one can suppose that it is a conditional promise of a blessing forfeited by

subsequent iniquity ; for it is a statement made of a future fact not given in the form of a promise ; and made at the very moment of the highest consummation of iniquity that the people ever were or ever could be guilty of, and with the declared contemplation of all the detail of that iniquity in the mind of him who made the declaration. Neither of these three usual modes of treating the title-deeds of the Jews can possibly be used in this case. Whatever nation of all the world have rule in Jerusalem except the people of Israel, Jerusalem is still trodden down of the Gentiles ; and unless there be a time forthcoming in the history of the world, in which that foreign dominion shall cease on Mount Zion, and “ *this nation,*” now dispersed “into all nations,” shall once more take the dominion, and put an end to the power of Gentiles to tread it under foot,—St. Peter erred when he called the word of prophecy more sure than the testimony of his own eyes to the specimen of our Lord’s power and coming ; nay—I hardly dare pursue the thought—the declarations of Him who is emphatically **THE TRUTH** will have failed. Who then shall characterise as rashness the assertion that the Jews will most certainly be literally restored as a nation to Jerusalem.

While this, taken in connexion with what has been already brought forward on the first point,

shews that our Saviour, in two different forms of speech, established the certainty of the literal restoration of the Jewish nation, it places equally beyond a doubt the period when it will take place; that is to say, the event to which it will immediately succeed. It cannot occur while the times of the Gentiles are yet unfulfilled: it cannot be delayed after those times shall have been completed. And as the knowledge of this rests upon so plain a statement of our Lord, we are led onward to inquire whether it may be possible to discover any ground for a reasonable expectation as to the particular period of the world's history in which this restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem is to take place. This will open to us the third branch of the subject.

III. SOME REASONS FOR CONCLUDING THAT THE EXPECTED PERIOD IS LIKELY TO BE NEAR AT HAND, DRAWN FROM A COMPARISON OF PRESENT EVENTS, WITH THE SIGNS GIVEN IN SCRIPTURE TO MARK THE APPROACH OF THAT PERIOD.

There is a very remarkable warning to be gathered from the reproach with which our Lord replied to the demand of the Pharisees and Sadducees for a sign out of heaven. He told them that they were willing to exercise their judgment in

marking the signs given of coming results by the laws of nature, but that they did not take a similar advantage of the intimations of God's purposes, with which they had been favoured by revelation. This is expressed by His reproof "Ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matt. xvi. 1—3; Luke xii. 54—56.)

This passage, taken in connexion with its circumstances, leads us to see that the prophetic statements of events that would occur at the time of the coming of the Messiah in his humiliation, were considered by our Lord as sufficient indexes to have prepared the minds of the Jews for that great event. And we may learn from this, that the same Messiah will expect that any indications of his coming in glory which may be given by the occurrence of events previously foretold as connected with that coming, shall be improved by those who ought to be acquainted with his word, in order to a more immediate preparation for his reception. There can be no doubt that we possess, in the Gospel light, clearer indexes and plainer signs than the Jews did of old, and therefore we shall be proportionably more accountable for taking heed to them.

A person commencing an inquiry after the signs which are to accompany the coming of the Lord in glory, may be compared to a man wh

goes forth in a fair night, for the purpose of searching for the calculated path of an approaching comet—the eye is dazzled with the crowd of splendid stars which pour upon it ; and it requires some pausing time to select aright the indicating beams. So when we open the Scriptures for this purpose, the pages sparkle with so many brilliant prophetic announcements, that there is need of much caution and prayerful consideration to know in what part we are to find the sure betokening line of events. Our Lord has himself lessened this difficulty in this prophecy upon the mount, where he has fixed upon two prominent events—stars of the first magnitude, the shining of which can hardly be mistaken. These, and some few circumstances connected with them, will be sufficient to set us so far forward in the search, that further inquiry will afterwards be comparatively easy.

The two prominent signs to which I allude are happily blended with those two divisions of the passage we have just considered ; so that much time will be saved in the inquiry by the argument we have already gone through. The first is distinctly given by our Lord, in answer to the request of his four disciples for information concerning signs, which drew forth the prophecy in question. They asked, “ what shall be the sign of the end of the dispensation ; ” and he first gave them

instructions to guide them as to what would *not* shew the end—"these things must come to pass, but *the end is not yet*;" and then he contrasted that statement with a sign which *would* shew that the end was at hand. (Matt. xxiv. 14.; Mark xiii. 10.) "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come;" or, as St. Mark says, "the Gospel must first be published among all nations."

There are two points to be considered in this statement—one is the fact of the publication of the Gospel to all nations—and the other is the end to be attained by that publication. The fact that the Gospel must and shall be preached or published to all nations, needs no remark; it is distinctly declared, and must be received as a certain truth, in simplicity of faith: but as to the end to be attained by the preaching of the Gospel spoken of, an attentive consideration of the prophecy will be necessary. It is plain that the object of preaching the Gospel to any *individual*, is in order that he may believe it to the saving of his soul; but the preaching of the Gospel is not spoken of here with reference to its effect, or intended effect, upon *individuals*; but especially with reference to its effect—its intended effect upon *nations*. There never has been a nation

yet on which the preaching of the Gospel has had the effect which it is intended to have on an individual; neither have we any reason to expect that there ever will be such a nation during any part of this dispensation. The individual upon whom the Gospel has its proper effect is turned to God, and becomes wholly a new creature. Where is the nation in which the hearts of all the citizens have turned to God, as the heart of one man, and become all righteous, all knowing the Lord? A nation may take up the banner of the Cross, and a true profession of faith may be made by its governors and people as a body corporate, and so it may be a Christian nation, as praised be God this nation is; but no one can think of limiting the proper effect of the Gospel to this result; which however is a result still far beyond the object proposed in the statement of our Lord. The fact is, that the final purpose of publishing the Gospel to nations, is different from the final purpose of publishing it to individuals, in the degree that means are different from the end. It is to be published to nations, in order to “*take out of them a people for his name,*” (Acts xv. 14); which people, spoken of collectively, are called **THE CHURCH**. It is to be published to individuals, that such as shall be saved may be added to the Church daily. The preaching of the Gospel to

a nation is therefore the means of filling up the ranks of the Church by the conversion of individuals from amongst the nation.

But in an inquiry of this kind, where the subject matter is of future fulfilment, and depends upon revelation, we cannot safely go beyond the very letter of the word ; and the sign given by our Lord makes no mention of conversions, nor any mention of profession, but simply declares that the " Gospel shall be preached as a witness," without making any reference whatever to the result upon the nation itself. All, therefore, that we are *warranted* in expecting is, that a declaration shall be made to all nations, that " God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

But although this is the whole amount of the statement made, yet the heart of a Christian will not rest satisfied with the notion that a mere proclamation of the name of Christ, upon the shores of every country in the world, will satisfy the expectation to be derived from this sign. And under this feeling we may venture to examine a little more closely, whether we cannot make some more enlarged result accord with the prophecy. Such an examination will lead us on thus far. All persons whose names are written in the book of life will surely be converted to God by the Gospel.

Those persons are to be gathered out of every “kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” (Rev. v. 9.) To this end it is necessary that the Gospel should be preached to every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and it will have been sufficiently preached for this purpose, when it shall have reached the ears, not of every individual in the nation, but of every one elected in the secret counsels of God. Though the sum of these from all generations, will be thousands that no man can number, yet alas! Jesus Christ himself has told us that they are few as compared with the mass of human kind. When all the “little flock,” who are to be led by the Chief Shepherd along the narrow road that leadeth to eternal life, shall have been gathered from the “midst of this naughty world,”—the wilderness where they are “dispersed abroad,”—then it may be surely said that, in its very largest sense, the Gospel will have been sufficiently preached *as a witness* to all nations.

But while thus much may be conceded to the *feelings* of the Christian heart, we are still bound in this matter to the limits of the *words spoken* by Christ, and written by His Spirit, for our learning. Those words bid us watch only for the time when the Gospel shall have been “PUBLISHED AMONG,” or, as in St. Matthew, “preached for A WITNESS UNTO all nations.”

By the light of this prophetic star in the Scriptures, let us examine for a moment the state of the world in this respect. We have arrived at a period in history in which the expression "all the world" has a positive meaning; while till now it had only a relative signification, and meant in fact but a small portion of the habitable globe. The advance of science, and the daring of man's mind, have left no possibility of anticipating a larger meaning to the term than that which it now conveys. Under the impulse of commercial enterprise, or of ambition, the whole surface of the globe has been explored. The entire ball has been furrowed as a ploughed field by adventurous ships. America has not only been discovered, but, after two centuries, a road to it has been tracked over the North Pole: and after the supposed limits of knowledge had ventured to portion the land into quarters, Australasia and Polynesia have arisen to mock our arithmetic. There cannot be a speck in the ocean but those marked down in our charts. And who are the people directed by the providence of God in laying open these last important pages of geographical knowledge? Who is the nation whose commercial enterprise has above all others enabled them to map out literally "all the world?" It is that one nation upon earth to whom God has been pleased to give, in a

degree beyond all competition the greatest, the knowledge and the power of the Gospel. And though (to our shame be it spoken) we have both nationally and too often individually despised the high privilege of bearing the standard of the Gospel, which our Christian pre-eminence has given us; yet to the glory of God may it be said, that He has not permitted his purpose to fail; and that while many British merchants have “run to and fro,” in spite of their coldness and neglect, Christian knowledge has been increased. It is impossible to look back for the last forty years, and not be struck with wonder at the rapid manner in which, during that period, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has been placed within the reach of those who speak a hundred and eighty different tongues. In consequence of the varied translations of this period, it may be said that there is no people upon earth who may not read, in some dialect of their own tongue wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God. Now, the large heart of a Christian may *desire* that millions of each nation should be saved; and that desire is the motive instrumentally employed, through the providence of God, for hastening, while there is yet time, the publication of that Gospel to yet more of the inhabitants of each nation. Hence the diligence in sending missionaries.

Hence the prayerfulness of the Church that lifts up their hands in their missionary work. But this desire cannot alter the written word ; it cannot enlarge the meaning of that expression by which Christ describes the sign ; it cannot prolong the list of names that are in the book of life, neither can it quicken our vision so as to enable us to read one single name written therein. It can but make us earnest in work, which earnestness tends the more to accomplish the number of God's elect, and so to hasten the end. It comes therefore to this : the Gospel is to be preached "as a witness" "amongst" all nations, and will be the means of converting all whose names are in the book of life. We know not how many may be of this number, though we know they are to be few compared to the whole. The Gospel is at this time published in so many languages as may reach to the ears of all nations. The declared object of its publication is but to be as a witness ; and when it shall have completed its testimony, then shall the end come. If, when the signs of the end *begin* to come to pass, we are to lift up our heads ; why, I ask, under these circumstances, should we hang them down now ? If this be but as a cloud arising out of the sea the size of a man's hand, does it not befit us to prepare our chariot, and get ready, that the rain stop us not.

The period allotted for the publication of the Gospel, in order to take out from amongst the nations a people for God, is the duration of the times of the Gentiles ; immediately upon the closing of which, Jerusalem is to cease to be trodden down of the Gentiles, and the Jews will take it in possession. It needs only to point out this connecting link with what has been already said on that subject ; and this connection opens before us the field of inquiry into the nature of the second prominent event marked by our Lord in his prophecy upon the Mount of Olives, to which we will now proceed.

We have seen that Jerusalem will cease to be trodden down of the Gentiles after the occurrence of a certain event ; but the prophecy conveyed no information by which we might be enabled to judge of the approach of that event. Our Lord, however, made a statement which opens to us the dawn of the day of Jewish glory, as one of the signs for which we are to be upon the watch. I have already shewn you that the great tribulation mentioned in St. Matthew is paraphrased by the fuller account given by St. Luke ; the proof of this is sufficient to preserve the Gentile reader from the mistaken notion, that the tribulation was limited to the horrible afflictions of the siege of Jerusalem, when so many thousands fell by the edge of the

sword. For our Lord distinctly stated, that they should not only fall by the edge of the sword, but that they should be carried away captive into all nations, and continue strangers to their own land until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. The great tribulation, therefore, means the dispersion, as well as the fearful breaking up, by which it was commenced. It means the sufferings of the Jews during their long captivity, from the hardness of their own hearts, and the hardness of the hearts of those amongst whom they are scattered. The right understanding of this word, “great tribulation,” is of first importance in the argument; for in the sense in which it is used in the 21st verse, it is also used in the 29th of St. Matthew’s account, where we find that this tribulation is to cease—these sufferings are to have an end—and that immediately upon their coming to a conclusion, will be the glorious coming of the Son of man;—“immediately after the tribulation of those days,” or as St. Mark has it, “In those days, after that tribulation.” With such a sign given to us by the Lord himself, who can resist an anxious inquiry into the present state and condition of the despised Jews. Many of us here present, are able to remember the early lessons of hatred to the Jews, which were taught to us in the nursery, when a ready name to express

the condensation of every thing to be despised was found in the word *Jew*, which was freely used as the taunt to irritate, and the bugbear to alarm. But, brethren, do we who are fathers, in the present day, teach our children such lessons as these? Is not the very idea repulsive to every heart in the congregation. True it is that the debased character, which Gentile treatment has mainly helped to foster in the Jewish mind, has engendered a feeling of suspicion which it is not easy to shake off. But equally true is it, that the spring of compassion has broken forth from the rock of the Gentile heart, and flows with so strong a current, as overcomes the repugnance of suspicion; and that the multitudes who take pity on the Jews now, as compared to the few who hate them, is just reversed in its proportion from what it was forty years ago, when few took pity on them, and multitudes hated them. What would have been said of an enthusiast at the beginning of the present century, who should have thought of gathering more than twenty thousand pounds a year in Great Britain, to promote the spiritual benefit of the people of Israel? How much of heartfelt unction now forces itself into the prayers of the church of Christ on behalf of the children of Abraham? This is a subject which calls for no argument, which needs no explanation; the breath

that speaks upon the theme of compassion for the people of Israel, is like the wind that sweeps over the Æolian harp: every string that it touches it forces, however tuned, into a melancholy harmony; every heart that is listening at this moment, though in different degrees according to character, is conscious of a kindly feeling towards the Jews. Is not then the very means of their tribulation nearly taken away? It has lately pleased God, in his providence, to measure the degree in which the tide of feeling is changed with respect to the Jews. It would almost seem that this had been the special purpose for which he permitted a revival of the barbarities of the darkest ages within the last twelvemonth. Forty years ago, who would have cared for the sufferings of a few poor wretched Jews, as they would have been called, under the ordinary cruelties of Eastern despotism? Yet have the piercing cries, extorted by the rack and thumb-screw, from half a dozen Hebrews at Rhodes and at Damascus, touched the hearts of all Europe, and produced an echoing cry of compassion and indignation, which has stayed the hand of the tormentor, and opened the prison doors. Must not, then, their affliction be so softened, that it can scarcely be called "the tribulation?"

While the hearts of the Gentiles are softened towards the Jews, look to the state of Jewish

feeling generally. There never was a period, since their dispersion, when there existed amongst them so tender a disposition toward the God of their fathers: not towards Jesus of Nazareth,—except, indeed, in the cases of those who are manifesting that they are part of the “remnant according to the election of grace,” and these are by no means few. An awakened interest in religious truth; a desire to read the Old Testament; an inquiry into the authority for unscriptural traditions—these are prominent evidences in the general body of the Jews. A breaking down of prejudice; a readiness of intercourse; a grateful sense of kindness—these mark the altered tone of feeling they entertain towards Christians. And thus one great exciting cause of their afflictions is removed, at the same time that the means of their chastisement by Gentile hatred is taken away. It may be said that these two have re-acted upon each other, and so these tokens may be deprived of the character of coincidence. But this cannot be said with respect to a *third* feature of their case. Gentile hearts are awakened; Jewish prejudices are softened; but besides this the providential course of events, which can be guided only by the hand of the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, runs in a current exactly suitable to these indications. On the part of the Jews, a traditionary expectation, founded

upon erroneous chronology, affords a testimony of the way in which the Almighty can make use, even of error, to serve the cause of truth. This has led great numbers of the Jewish people to expect the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the appearance of Messiah, about this period. Not that they are thereby led, in any great numbers, to go to Jerusalem under present circumstances. It appears to me that an unreasonable expectation is sometimes formed upon this point, by many Christians. I know of no passage of Scripture which should induce the Jews, as a body, to force themselves under the bondage of the Ottoman tyranny. They who are ready to be taken to Jerusalem, when the ensign is lifted up, and the means and opportunities are before them, may still wait in their distant lands, until the trumpet is blown from Mount Zion, and the vessels of bulrushes are launched to convey them upon the waters: when this does occur, there will be comparatively little difference of opinion concerning the reality of the token. Until then, the sign must be searched for in their packing up and getting ready; yet may this be greatly confirmed by explaining the real state of the case, at this moment, at Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem has about twenty thousand inhabitants—one fourth of that number are Jews—to which may be added, about fourteen or fifteen thousand

more in the Holy Land and its immediate neighbourhood. Now, when we consider that the Jews in Jerusalem are supported entirely by the alms of their brethren in other parts of the world ; especially despised ; without occupation by which to gain a livelihood ; and exposed to dire calamity from disease, and poverty, and oppression, in a degree greater than in other parts of the world ;—then add the consideration, that those who go there by choice, must be persons of enthusiastic character, and yet only those of that character, whose external circumstances will concur in permitting such an act of martyrdom ;—then to find that the Jewish community furnishes twenty thousand such examples, must produce, in a very high degree, a sense of general preparedness of the whole people, to rise up to a man, at the first intelligible symptom that the treading down of Jerusalem is coming to an end.

While this is their state, external circumstances are ordered with a fitness that cannot be fortuitous. Palestine forgotten, comparatively desert, had lain unnoticed since the time of the crusades. One ray of public interest beamed upon it, when the giant wonder of modern history attempted to plant his foot there : it shone but for an instant, all was dark again, and a pilgrimage to Jerusalem was a matter of infinitely greater rarity and

difficulty than a voyage to China. How changed the scene within the last twelvemonth ! when beacon fires seem to be lighted upon Olivet and Lebanon, upon which the gaze of all the world is intent. Egypt, Tyre, and Damascus are names familiar to the simplest politician, and the theatre of the world's interest is planted "between the sea and the holy mountain." Nor is this a trifling, or a temporary sign. Take it in connexion with that mystical word which shines like the handwriting on the wall in this day of the world's great revelry : "And the angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared." (Rev. xvi. 12.) There is so general an agreement with respect to the meaning of this prophecy, that I need do no more than refer to it, in order to call attention to its gradual but very evident fulfilment in the present day. Turkey is shorn of her strength ; hair by hair the lock of Sampson has been cut off ; plague, and fire, and sword have had their share in the work : she has been despoiled of province after province ; fleet after fleet has been lost ; army after army has been sacrificed ; and now a boy sits upon a powerless throne, just at the time when the "kings of the East" are making ready to dry up the remaining waters of the river with

the sole of their foot. Surely, then, with such preparedness of heart towards them; such preparedness of feeling and expectation amongst them; and above all, with such preparedness of providential circumstances around them, can it be otherwise than that the days of their tribulation are fast passing away?

It cannot be expected that, upon the present occasion, we can enter upon an examination of this interesting search respecting the signs of the times with anything like detail. And having just opened the channels, into which a broad current of thought may easily be made to flow from those hearts that are truly interested in the great events we anticipate, I should have pointed to no other signs than those indicated in the prophecy on the Mount, if it were not that perhaps one of the most remarkable of the signs of the times is very generally overlooked. To this I will briefly call your attention.

The researches of the learned have been always directed with more or less of diligence to discover the application of those several notices of special dates which are to be found in various parts of the word of God. I confess for myself, that in pursuing all such inquiries I have been forced to walk with a timid step, and with a nervous apprehension that our Lord's warning might be applied

to hinder our venturing upon that path of study. "Of the day and hour knoweth no man:" and again, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." This feeling is often met by the demand, "For what then are these dates written? Are they not part of that Scripture, all of which is written for our learning?" And the reply which seems satisfactory is this. It will be seen hereafter, for what special purpose each date has been recorded: but in the meantime a thin scattering of such interesting enigmas upon the surface of the Scriptural field is admirably adapted to excite the diligence of persons of a very important character of mind; just those persons who need the enticement thus afforded to draw forth the resources and powers which they possess, and which are necessary for a minute and critical examination of the Scriptures. If the occurrence of the few dates that are found in Scripture should effect nothing more than this, I for one shall be fully satisfied that they will have done enough to justify their insertion, without any other ulterior object. But the time has come when they are effecting another important object. Each date has been measured, and tried, and criticised; and the constant variety of judgments as to its commencement, or its extension, leaves it like a moveable

quicksand, in which the learning of one after another founders. But while each date separately presents its peculiar difficulties, all the dates in Scripture together form, as a subject, one of the most striking signs which can be afforded. Whatever difference there might have been about dates in former years, all the epochs which guided the student in fixing them, are now either completed or nearly so; and that too upon the concurrent testimony of opposing parties in the controversy, who, while they differ as to a few years more or less, agree mainly in this, that the length of these several periods must have been nearly reached. Who can doubt, for instance, that the two thousand three hundred days of Daniel must be nearly accomplished; not contesting the calculation of a few years more or less, nor deciding whether its commencement exactly synchronizes with the beginning of 70 weeks. The calculation of the seventy jubilees, from the possession of the land under Joshua, strikingly concurs with the present signs. It may perhaps be impossible to satisfy the mind as to the accuracy of any one of the systems for fixing the commencement of the 1260 years—that period so variously repeated in Scripture. But while no precise calculation may quite satisfy the mind, who can doubt that those years must have been nearly told out in the course of

the world's history? And with whatever degree of dogmatism zealous advocates may maintain this or that interpretation of this much discussed point; there is one silent interpreter which ought to produce a feeling more convincing in its vagueness than all the precision of minute commentators. The standard of the cross had been reared six hundred years, when Mahommed appeared, and the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over the prostrate and distracted church was then sufficiently established to put an end to all doubt of its existence. The Arabian impostor, by commencing the calculation of time from the Hegira, set up a vast clock in the East, upon the dial plate of which the silent hands have ever since been marking the progress of that eventful "time, times, and half a time." And while students in England are differing about the commencement of that period, the accounts from the still Mahomedan Holy Land, of victories over the waning crescent, by their silent date in the present year 1256, give warning that we must not waste the hours in *disputation* about dates, while their glass is running out to the last grain of sand; but that we must rather agree to get ready for the solution of all difficulties at that approaching period; into which all Scriptural dates cluster—the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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pressing it home to the heart, which makes it reasonable for us to believe, that the number of God's elect is very fast accomplishing. Oh, may the weight of these evidences fall with their due pressure, to drive home to each heart here present the point of this one application. Have *we* been manifested as belonging to that blessed number? Are we looking for, and hastening unto, the coming of the day of God? Have we our loins girded about, and our lamps burning, as waiting for our Lord, that when he cometh and knocketh we may open to Him immediately? A deeply interesting field still lies before us, the examination of which, next Friday, may, under God's blessing, greatly assist us in profiting by this application. In the meantime I would dismiss you to your homes, entreating you to fix upon your minds that all-important inquiry, "Am I a child of God, expecting—preparing—waiting for His Son from heaven?" May the Spirit of Jesus press home this inquiry to each of your hearts, until he give us an answer of power and of peace. **AMEN.**

THE
BLESSINGS PROMISED,
AND
THE JUDGMENTS DENOUNCED,
AFTER THE
RESTORATION OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

LECTURE X.

THE BLESSINGS PROMISED TO THE RIGHTEOUS,
AND THE JUDGMENTS DENOUNCED UPON THE
WICKED, AT THE PERIOD AFTER THE RESTO-
RATION OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL TO JERU-
SALEM.

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LUKE xxi. 36.

*Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may
be accounted worthy to escape all these things
that shall come to pass, and to stand before the
Son of Man.*

THE text is a practical condensation of the whole subject before us. It is the point to which every part of it tends; and that portion of the subject which has been allotted to me, expands in interest in proportion as we proceed towards this point. After the last lecture, we may be said to have arrived at the confluence of two great streams—the

stream of compassion for others, and the stream of self-interest. We floated down the stream of compassion for the Jews upon the last occasion, and now we come into the broad current of the two combined. It is a subject of thrilling interest: but it is one which requires much particularity of attention. It has been confused with so many statements of various kinds, that to be able to gather up a simple, clear view of truth, in the midst of all, there must be some labour, more indeed than our minds are generally prepared to undertake. I call upon you, therefore, to be prepared for some close examination of a few portions of Scripture on this subject: and to enter upon the work with earnestness of heart, and with solemnity of feeling; for remember it is leading us to the great point, the consummation of our own destiny.

I pray God that his holy Spirit may be with us. Without him we can learn nothing aright. O God, thou hast said, if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of thee, who givest to all men liberally, and upbraidest not, and it shall be given him. We spread this thy promise before thee now: we plead it, and we beseech thee give us the wisdom that we lack. Give to the minister wisdom to speak words of truth, and make them words of power by thine own Spirit. Give to the

people wisdom that they may hear, search, mark, learn, and inwardly digest whatever portion of the truth shall be spoken. May God, for Christ's sake, give to each of us the Holy Ghost.

We have established, in the last Lecture, that the Scripture warrants a certain expectation of a literal restoration of the people of Judah and Israel to that country, which they received by a divine grant; and that this may be gathered from many parts of the word of God, but especially from two distinct statements of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Secondly, we established that the realizing of this expectation may be confidently dated at the end of the times of the Gentiles, or that period or portion of time in which God visits the nations of the earth, in order "to take out of them a people for his name." And thirdly, we have seen that certain signs have been given in the Scriptures, by comparing which with the signs of the present day, we may reasonably conclude that there is, at this moment, a fitness, a preparedness; something, to say the least, like the state of things which may be expected as the preparation for the coming great event. The most remarkable of these signs of the times were shewn to be three: 1st, That the publication of the Gospel has been so far extended, that it has been put into languages by

which every nation of the world may, in some of their dialects, come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus: 2nd, That the hearts of the Gentiles are turning to the Jews, and the hearts of the Jews to the Gentiles, manifesting a softening and feeling of kindliness on both sides, while an especial fitness of providential circumstances coincides with this preparation of hearts: and 3dly, That the length of all the Scriptural dates seems to have run out, or nearly so.

You will observe, that in each of these three signs there is a character of generality. It is perfectly true that the Scriptures have been put into a very great number of languages; that the Gospel has been preached in various parts of the world; and that we may reasonably gather an inference from this, that the times of the Gentiles are nearly approaching their end, though there is no one defined point, date, or particular circumstance to which we can refer as the special mark that the sign has appeared. So also with the persecution and subsequent feeling of kindliness towards the Jews;—it is a general matter. And again, there is an undefinedness about the dates which leaves us in great difficulty as to their special completion. There is not one of the dates of which it can be certainly predicated that it was accomplished on a fixed day.

I have shewn that in the prophecy which our Lord delivered upon the Mount of Olives, immediately before his death—from which I have taken the text—he pointed out two remarkable signs. One is, that the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached as a witness to all nations. This leaves us still to that generality of which I speak. Not so the other. It referred to a particular, a specific act—something that can be dated as happening on a day—an hour. He spoke of a fact in future history. It certainly is either true that Jerusalem is under the dominion of one or more of the Gentile nations, or else that it is not under such a dominion. The generality of the former sign may be compared to the dawning of the day, as it first begins to brighten the horizon. By its light we begin to discern objects somewhat less dimly. The prophetic Scriptures, at which we groped in the dark before, seem to have a meaning that we can comprehend more distinctly. But the sign of the particular fact would be like the actual appearance of the orb of day; a point of time positive and defined, affording a light, as when you can say, “The sun is risen.”

Our object at present will be to follow the course of Scriptural announcement, from this defined point, from the time when the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles shall have had

its complete fulfilment, and discover whatever may be traced as dated subsequent to that distinct event; so that we may have a clear Scriptural anticipation of the historical path beyond it. But you are to remember that this is not to be taken as a matter of speculation; it is not a matter of argument, it is a matter of simple revelation. It is utterly impossible that we could have discovered what may be expected to take place, unless God had declared it. Therefore, we must search the Scriptures; and all I have to do is to bring before you, as simply and as connectedly as I can, such Scriptures as announce events, which, by the light of God's word, we can see are to be dated subsequently to that epoch. The difficulty arises from the great number of Scriptures that crowd upon us; and bewilder our minds, as the morning clouds in the valley hinder our sight from defining the outlines of objects. We have all been accustomed to read the prophetic Scriptures in the confusion of their unfulfilledness, as it were before the dawning of the day clears the valley of its clouds; and to catch up notions concerning certain texts, which suit with special theories: and we have all felt more or less, in our subsequent and closer study the great evil of this habit; we have all felt that we had to throw aside texts which we

received as assuredly belonging to this, that, or the other particular point; and especially on the great inquiry as to that which is to succeed the restoration of the Jews, and to precede the coming of the Lord. The texts that *seem* to have a bearing on the subject are so numerous, that it cannot but be difficult for us to select, and then erase from our minds, the impressions left by those which we lay aside. I ask however, at present, a special attention merely to those texts which I shall point out. I purpose to take one, and then another, and then another, and see how we can link them together, to the exclusion, for the present, of any that cannot be clearly, easily, and distinctly linked on to the last. To do this will require wisdom; but we have asked for wisdom, pleading the promise that it shall be given to those that ask in faith: we will not doubt but that our prayer will be answered. If we want wisdom in this search, where shall we go but to wisdom itself? Jesus is Wisdom. Now Jesus Christ has delivered a statement of the things we inquire for: he has condescended to give us a summary of them, short and succinct—a few facts, but communicated by the mouth of Wisdom itself. His prophecy on the Mount of Olives, which we have been considering in these lectures, contains such a general summary of the events

which are to follow that defined period of which I have spoken.

We will commence the present inquiry from that part of the discourse concerning which there is neither controversy nor dispute. You will remember that this prophecy is reported by three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Turn to the 24th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and begin at the 29th verse. Whatever difficulty there may be in understanding this chapter, the points of dispute are found in the former part : so that we may proceed with confidence to examine what follows. Our Lord says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great shout of a trumpet : and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." This is the account that St. Matthew gives, writing for the Jewish readers. Mark's account is found in his 13th chapter 24th verse : "But in those days, after that t

lation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with power and great glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." This is exactly similar to the statement of St. Matthew. In St. Luke's Gospel, written for Gentiles, the circumstances are enlarged; you will find his account in the 21st chapter, at the 25th verse: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

It will be necessary, according to the plan proposed, to connect this part of the prophecy to those truths which have been already established. This is done in the first verse, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days." You will remember what has been said concerning the tribulation described by Matthew merely as "the great tri-

bulation ;” but more largely explained by St. Luke. The “tribulation” spoken of in the 21st verse of the 24th chapter of Matthew, may be compared to an object-glass closed. St. Luke draws it out joint by joint. He first enlarges our view of “the great tribulation” by stating that “these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.” He then explains one step further : “There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people ;” — then, with more particularity, declares that there shall be a massacre : “They shall fall by the edge of the sword ;”—and a leading into captivity : they “shall be led away captive into all nations.” At last he draws out the glass to the full focus : “And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Thus is the picture defined in its detail, and we discern by this glass the whole of the prophetic history involved in “the great tribulation.” This brings the whole to a specified point. The Jews are, or are not, in Jerusalem ; Jerusalem is, or is not, trodden down of the Gentiles. But suppose an edict were to issue from Constantinople, like that of Cyrus—suppose, by the combined determination of the great powers in congress, any act of convention or treaty were signed, by which it should be declared that the Jews shall have su-

premacý in Jerusalem ; or suppose, by any act of their own, they acquire such a supremacy ;—that act must bear a date : that fact takes place on a certain day : on that day Jerusalem ceases to be trodden down of the Gentiles ; the event is defined, and upon the occurring of that event the tribulation ends,—the tribulation that began with the days of vengeance and wrath upon the Holy Land, when the Jews fell by the edge of the sword by thousands,—the tribulation during which they were led captive into all nations,—the tribulation which has made them the nation meted out and trodden down from the day of its beginning to this moment,—the period known as “the times of the Gentiles,” during which Jerusalem is to be trodden down ; and when that ceases, then the tribulation ceases.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days.”—Nothing can be more defined than this. There has been much difficulty as to the interpretation of the former part of this chapter. The explanation of the whole turns, as on a pivot, on the word “immediately.” When commentators have come to this word, they could not erase it : and by disregarding the defined explanation afforded by Luke, and limiting their interpretation of the great tribulation to the period of the siege of Jerusalem alone, they have been con-

strained to date the events which follow, as coming immediately after that siege. The events, declared in the prophecy to follow, are the circumstances connected with the coming of the Lord. Yet had the commentators been forced before to make it appear that in some sense or other the siege itself was meant to be the coming of the Lord; now it appears that immediately after the siege he is to come. How that which was to end when the tribulation ceased, can be the same as that which was to follow after it had ceased, it would seem difficult to imagine. But we are not now to solve this difficulty: our business is with the passage disconnected from the incumbrance of this interpretation.

—Immediately after the tribulation of those days:—and then the events which are to follow, are stated. Our Lord leads us, in the first place, to the expectation of signs in the sun, moon, and stars. We find intimations here of great astronomical derangements. Secondly, we are to expect on the earth “distress of nations, with perplexity.” We are next told of violent tempests and inundations, “the sea and the waves roaring:” and then the effect of these things on men’s hearts is declared:—that they shall fail for fear and uncertain anxiety as to what is coming upon the earth.

There has been a disposition to consider the words, “signs in the sun, and moon, and stars,” and also “the sea and the waves roaring,” in a figurative sense. But it is hardly to be supposed that our Lord would have used them thus in a passage of Scripture of the most distinct plainness of literal interpretation, and where there is not another word so employed. It seems to be a plain, simple declaration of the events which are to take place—a summary of circumstances, in which these two classes of signs are so intermixed with literal facts, with a statement that cannot be figurative, that I do not think that, on attentively considering the passage, any other conclusion can fairly be drawn, than that they mean, simply and plainly, great astronomical and physical derangements—those things that shew the heavings of nature, the great throes of the labour of Providence, in bringing forth the vast event, the birth of the new world, renewed as it is to be at the restitution of all things. Those, however, who adhere to the figurative interpretation of these signs, must remember, that, according to their own view, the use of these figures can only be for the purpose of conveying to the mind notions of still greater calamities, and still more portentous events, than the things expressed; and that they must be of similar nature, in a degree at

least, to make the use of such language a fit mode of shadowing forth the intended ideas. Therefore, while this view of the subject may charge us with error in *particulars* when we consider the words literally ; yet the general result of our mode of considering the signs, must not only be correct in kind, but less in degree, than would be the consequence of an examination of the substance events, of which these figures could be but shadows. But surely at so great a birth we should expect throes like to these ; and that nature itself would weep and wail, even as we find she did at the great work of the atoning Lamb of God, when he gave up the ghost. “There will be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ;”—signs which perhaps some learned unbelievers of the world will look upon, and try to account for : books may perchance be written on the various phenomena that will be presented ; and these extraordinary appearances may be traced to a thousand plausible causes, by those who do not take for their guide the only book that can explain the truth.

While these signs are indicating the rocking of the foundations of the heavens and the earth, there will be distress of nations—a collapse of heart in the rulers of the kingdoms—with perplexity. Perplexity, indeed, seems the appropriate

descriptive epithet for the policy of the nations at the present time ; but how different this from the prophesied perplexity immediately after the restoration of Israel. Although we who sit down quietly to read in private life the public events, may be perplexed at the entangled labyrinth of affairs, yet the politicians think they have the reins safely in their own hands. But at that time a universal perplexity shall seize all men ; the rulers of nations and the hearts of individuals will be quailing for fear : and while on the one hand the heavens will be heaving, and on the other the sea will be roaring, causing vast inundations, and the terrible storms and tempests to quicken and heighten the terror of the time ; then it is that men's hearts will fail them for fear, and for looking for those things that are coming on the earth.

But this leads us to the events beyond all others of the greatest importance ; for then comes that which is described in the 24th of Matthew, verse 30. Remember that St. Luke was writing to the Gentiles, and details whatever interests *them*. St. Matthew sums up the events we have just been considering from St. Luke's account, in these words : " Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." But in giving information which concerns the Jew as much as the Gentile, his statement is less condensed. He says,

“Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” And here our Lord breaks off his prophetic announcements, in order to make the practical application. Having given all the information he chose to reveal, he proceeds to urge the duty of constant watchfulness. But are these all the particulars that the Holy Spirit has given? It is necessary, in a matter of this importance, to be especially careful in searching the Scriptures; and if we can discover, amongst all the texts that seem to bear upon this subject, some passage containing a distinct reference to the several points mentioned in the statement of our Lord, then we run no risk in asserting with confidence that the two passages dovetail into each other, and form one continuous revelation. There are five particulars mentioned in this statement of our Lord. 1st, The sign of the Son of man coming in heaven. 2nd, That he shall appear in the clouds. 3rd, That he shall be escorted by his angels with a great sound of a trumpet. 4th, That he shall come with the sound of a trumpet. 5th, That he will then gather his elect. These five points include the whole state

they make up the sum of all the information contained in this passage of our Lord's prophecy. Now if we turn to the First Epistle to the Thesalonians, the 4th chapter, we shall find a passage referring to the same subject, enumerating all the same points, and thus exactly dovetailing into the prophecy before us. While it contains every one of these points, it conveys also other details. In order properly to connect the new link of information, we must consider the object of the passage. St. Paul was speaking to Christians who had lost their friends by death. He says, at the 13th verse, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Here we find the occasion which produced the statement concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle was comforting the hearts of those whose departed friends were laid in the grave. He told them that they need not sorrow concerning those that were dead in Christ, for that God would bring them with Jesus. To this word "with," I request your particular attention. When the apostle has said, that God would bring them *with* Jesus, he proceeds to shew how the Lord Jesus would gather them, in order that they

might be brought with him. He explains the process by which those whose mortal bodies lay in the grave, should have those bodies renewed, and put on immortality.

“ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord ; ”—a remarkably emphatic phrase, considering that he wrote the whole epistle under the inspiration of God ; “ that we, which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent ”—that is, leave behind —“ them which are asleep.” We shall not go before them : we shall not miss seeing them. Thus those who had lost their Christian friends, may be sure of meeting them again. He then explains *how* this will take place : “ For the Lord himself ”—that is, he alone, he without his saints—“ shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” *With* the Lord—thus it is that God will gather the saints in order to bring them with Jesus.

When we compare these two passages together, we find in the statement of the coming of our Lord, made by Paul to the Thessalonians, that there will be a *sign* of the Son of man ; for we are told, that the Lord shall descend in a cloud, but as yet

only so far towards the earth as into its atmosphere — from heaven, the throne of God, to what is called “the heavens,” or physical organization encircling this world—near enough to be the *sign* of the Son of man *coming* in heaven, far enough off to have the saints received up to him from the surface of the earth: then he will be seen *coming*, though not yet fully come—the MAN by *himself*, until he raises his fellow-men to be *with* Him at his coming. This shall be the *sign* of the Son of man in heaven, when he is thus *coming*. This is the first point in both the passages.

The other points are all subsidiary to this. The second is, that the Lord shall come in the clouds. Such also is the declaration of St. Paul. The third is, that there will be the voice of the archangel; the fourth, the sound of the trumpet; the fifth, that he will gather his elect from every part. The whole purpose of the passage in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, is to shew us that God will gather those that are dead and those that are living, so that all his saints “shall ever be with the Lord.”

The glorious gathering thus described is that redemption of the body, of which St. Paul speaks in the 8th chapter of the Romans. He had been

speaking of the spirit of adoption, whereby the saints are enabled to cry Abba, Father, (ver. 15); and then he leads the mind on to the complete and perfect adoption—to wit, the redemption of our body, (ver. 23). This is what he thus particularly describes in the passage to the Thessalonians; this is the redemption of the body, to which he alludes in the Epistle to the Philippians, when he tells us that “our conversation”—our citizenship—“is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body,”—(the body of humiliation)—“that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body”—(the body of glory)—“according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” (Phil. iii. 20, 21). This is the great change of which St. John speaks, when he says, “We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” (1 John iii. 2.)

We will now turn again to our Lord’s words, as recorded in the 21st chapter of St. Luke’s Gospel, the 28th verse: and we find that, after announcing these eventful signs of the great consummation, He calls upon his disciples to exercise the most earnest watchfulness for the first appearance of these signs, and the most lively faithfulness of anticipation at the very first indication of the forthcoming crisis; “when these things *begin* to

come to pass, *then* look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.” This would of itself be a sufficient warning to take heed to mark the occurrence of such events as seem to correspond with the foretold signs. And if any person should be unable to receive the further remark on this point, which I am about to make, he must remember, that the reasonable duty of watching the signs of the times is sufficiently established by this one text alone, (Luke xxi. 28.) whatever interpretation he may put upon the verses which follow it.

In illustration of this warning, Jesus delivered a parable, the purport of which has been strangely mistaken ; very probably because the earnestness with which students have endeavoured to escape the difficulty that seemed to them to exist, in the interpretation of the principal words, has made them overlook the real power and meaning of a comparatively insignificant portion of the text. Jesus said, “ Behold the fig tree, and all the trees ; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.” He then applies this parable : “ So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand ; and he shews that he means to inculcate a continual spirit of watchfulness for the coming of the

great events he had foretold. He concludes this application by a solemn assertion, conveyed in English in these words, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled," (Luke xxi. 22—32 ; Matt. xxiv. 32—34 ; Mark xiii. 28—30).

As the events referred to seem evidently to be spread over a long period of time, it could not be expected that they should be accomplished during the lives of men then existing. Under this impression, commentators have sought for the means of reconciling the difficulty ; some have gone to the length of accommodating the events which occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem, to the signs announced, in order to bring them within the space of forty years, that they might take the word "generation" in its obvious sense ; and others have distorted that sense to apply it to the nation of the Jews, as a separate *people*, contrary to the just rules of language, that they might extend its meaning over a necessary length of time, to reach to the present and future generations. All such persons seem to have been wasting their strength in trying to force the bars of the great gates of a city, while an unlocked wicket was ready at their feet, unheeded from its apparent insignificance. If the pronoun used to characterize the "generation," be properly examined,

an access is made to a clear and intelligible meaning for this apparently difficult passage. The word in Greek, translated *this* (*ovtos*), is a pronoun used emphatically to describe the thing last spoken of; and may be rendered in English as often by the word *that*, as by the word *this*; the choice between the two will depend entirely upon the context; as abundantly appears from our own English version of the Scriptures. But the most proper rendering which it receives, is by the words "*the same*;" a specimen of which may be taken from the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, ver. 2: "*The same* was in the beginning with God;" that is, this divine word, just mentioned: and another from Luke xvii. 34, "*in that* night;" or the night last referred to. In the original both these pronouns are the same word, as also in a multitude of similar instances. If it had happened that our translators had rendered the identical pronoun in this passage, by either of the words they selected for those now quoted, the mind of the readers would long ago have been familiarized with the simple and powerful meaning of our Lord's application of the parable: "Verily I say unto you, *The same* generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." What generation does he refer to? With critical accuracy he emphatically refers to the generation

last spoken of in the parable ; and he asserts that the generation of men upon earth who shall be living to see the budding of the April branches, shall not have been taken from this life, until they behold the summer fruits of these glorious events.

If this be a correct view of the passage, it conveys a lesson admirably adapted to excite the earnest attention of each succeeding generation, in watching the signs of the times, and in comparing them with those scriptural accounts of forerunning circumstances, which may be taken as delineations of shadows from the restitution of all things that are cast hitherward from their substance events, because they are marked out by beams from the Source of truth, who dwells in the eternity beyond them. Each generation may set their watch, with the assurance that if they discern the shadow, the substance will follow even in their own time ; each may be encouraged by the thought, that if they catch the sound of the knocking, the door will be opened while yet they live.

But whether this view of the passage be correct or not, the motives for a watchful attention to the signs of the times, are, as I have already said, abundantly sufficient without it ; and, at all events, it must be plain that certain preparatory events are referred to by our Lord, which, when they come to pass, his

disciples may confidently believe that they are the dawn of the coming day of glory; when these events *begin* to happen, the impulse of assured hope may be indulged; we may lift up our heads, for the perfect adoption—to wit, the redemption of the body draweth nigh. It may be a question how far back into the prophecy our Lord intended to cast this bright morning beam of hope, or to what prominent event in the retrospect he meant it to reach, so that the contemporary Christians might see that event lighted up with a ray from the glorious day-spring, and lift up their heads. The antecedent announcements, referred to as “these things,” may perhaps include even the preaching of the Gospel as a witness to all nations (Matt. xxiv. 14); and the passing of the great tribulation from the Jews; and the closing of the times of the Gentiles (Luke xxi. 24); which signs have been fully treated of in the last Lecture. But though it may be a matter of opinion how far back the cheering beginning of “these things” may “*begin*,” yet it cannot be doubted that the events foretold in *immediate* connection with this command, to “lift up our heads,” must give a legitimate warrant for the glorious anticipation. He may perchance err who applies the *beginning* spoken of to events anterior to the restoration to Jerusalem; but when that city shall have ceased

to be trodden down of the Gentiles, then surely the first corresponding signs, which shall appear in the heavens and on the earth, must be "*these things*," to which our Lord so emphatically points and directs our attention, as to the occasion on which we may know He is nigh, even at the doors. When once again Jerusalem shall be under Jewish supremacy, then may we look for astronomical derangements—distress of nations with perplexity—great inundations and storms—men's hearts failing them for fear: and "When *these things* begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

Let us pause here. We will rest from our close examination into the subject immediately before us, and consider whether we comprehend the distinction here drawn between "men's hearts," and the "lifting up of your heads." "Men's hearts failing them." Whose hearts? The hearts of the men of the world. The hearts of those who have gone on all their days heaping up things for this life, and wrath for the day of wrath—the hearts of those who, when they have heard Christ's ministers preaching of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and of the restoration of the people of Israel, have smiled at their amusing speculations and

childish researches—the hearts of those who have put this matter aside, as of no importance at all, and gone to their labours for worldly gain, following the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,—all these, when they hear that the Jews are established in Jerusalem; when they take up their newspapers, and read the edict of some second Cyrus, or find that the rulers of the nations have declared that the Jews shall be again an independent people; when they see the decision carried into action, and afterwards shall hear the thunder, and mark the derangement of the stars, and the earth heaving and rending asunder at the sight—then it is that their hearts—that such “*men’s hearts*,” will fail them. What did our Lord say? Praised be God, the very cannon-shot that announces the beginning of the battle, the very alarm-bell that gives a spasm of fear to every one of these men—it is the sound of joy, which is the key-note of a song of praise on the Christian’s lips. He exclaims, “Praised be God, my redemption draweth nigh. I have taken up the language of the Apostle, and said, ‘In this I groan, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of my body;’ but there is no more groaning now; my redemption draweth nigh.” All depends on this, whether you have those “*men’s hearts*,” or whe-

ther you are of those whose heads are to be lifted up. Are you, my brethren, looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it the object of your life, the anticipation of your bosoms,—that which tints all your thoughts with a certain colouring,—that which enables you to live as not belonging to this world, weans you from it, reconciles you to disappointment, and takes away the sting of death, not in your own case only, but in the deeper wounding of your heart, in the case of those who are torn from you? Do you comfort yourselves with the thought that the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; that the dead in Christ shall rise; and that they which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds? Is this the redemption of the body that you are looking for? Then you will feel what joy it is to be carried safely through all the tribulation—to “escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

My brethren, St. Paul's application of this passage touches a chord which I think is very legitimately to be used in harmony with this subject. Indeed it must be so used; for the inspired Apostle, speaking by the word of the Lord, :

uses it. Have any of you lost some dear friend—one whom you would gladly have given up this world's wealth to have kept here a little longer? What mother has had a child of her heart torn from her? what husband his wife—what wife her husband? or if mercifully preserved from these deep wounds of the heart, who has appropriated the facts revealed in the word of God, and marked the sufferings, and the patience, and the faith of the saints of old, and not anticipated the time when we shall see those saints face to face, and hold sweet intercourse with them in the glorified body? The Apostle tells us the particulars of that glorious coming of the Lord, that looking forward with a faithful patience for that day, we may comfort our hearts with the assured confidence of seeing them all—all who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

Our Lord says, that his elect shall be gathered from the uttermost parts of earth and heaven. All God's elect—every one whose name is written in the book of life—every one that has loved him on earth—we shall meet them all there. If we be dead—if we be fallen asleep in Jesus—we shall be raised from the dead, and these our mortal bodies shall be changed; for this mortal must put on immortality: those who are dead shall be raised, and those who are alive shall be changed

to meet them. What unspeakable feelings will that meeting produce !

And what a motive does this afford to urge this subject upon those who are not yet manifesting that they are in Christ. For there follows a fearful result after the parable which has been already explained. Our Lord says, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." We are not to know the precise day. If we search for the time, we are to search by signs, as the parable teaches us. Then Jesus proceeds in the prophecy: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away"—my brethren, think of these words "*knew not*"—"so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Multitudes, in spite of all the knowledge of an enlightened and highly educated age; in spite of this stirring prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ; in spite of the abundant means of grace afforded on every side, and the constant warnings and invitations of God's ministers; in spite of the wonders that will take place, they *will not know* till the

sign of the Son of man is seen in heaven ; and then it will be, as before the flood, too late. There are multitudes in this Christian country, who have no more notion of the surpassing importance of the truths which we are now considering, than the men who lived before the flood had of the events which were declared by Noah as certainly coming to pass ; multitudes who are wholly engrossed in matters, in their very nature, incompatible with these truths. Their minds are not able to grasp them ; and if the Jews were to be restored to-morrow, and the sun, and moon, and stars, to give their subsequent manifestations, when the people of the Lord shall be lifting up their heads, what is to become of such as these ? They shall see that sign of the Son of man in heaven ; they shall see the elect taken up to meet him ; but they shall be left ? For how does the prophecy proceed ? “ There shall be two in the field, the one shall be taken ” up into the clouds to meet the Lord — for that is the antecedent point referred to in verse 31 — “ and the other left : two women shall be grinding at the mill ; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” By bringing forward two cases of ordinary domestic intercourse, our Lord sets before us those that are bound in the habits of natural affection, and mutual depen-

dence : there shall be two of them ; the one taken and the other left ; those whom you love—whom you meet day by day—who enter into your present feelings of a temporal nature—who follow the same occupation—with whom you mingle in society, and hold kindly intercourse on the common occurrences of life. You who are spiritual children of God will be taken—these will be left. What Christian can be cold enough not to force on their friends the remembrance that the Lord is at hand ; and that unless they know the truth now—unless they are getting ready, and are amongst those who may lift up their heads when our redemption draws nigh, then at the sound of the great trumpet they will be left ; their natural affections will be all broken, and their doom sealed in separation, and in unspeakable anguish for eternity ? Oh how many husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters, and parents and children, will, in that parting, feel the final wring and wrench of the heart bursting with the thought that some dear one is lost ! the last pang of dissolving mortality. It will be but for a moment, but it will be agony intense. If you have known what it is to love a fellow creature, what a motive does this supply to boldness and diligence, in stirring up every one of such slumbering ones ! How forcibly it reminds us that we should not be satisfied with a sort of selfish knowledge of Christ ;

but that we should burn to spread it far and wide ; running the risk of all that can be said in mockery, or in anger, against us, rather than allow any, so far as our influence will go, to stand in so awful a situation, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come ; remembering that there is no safety but being in Christ now, and no union with him but by His Spirit within us.

And what will then be the state of the world ? Christ's true people are the salt of the earth : we preserve it from the wrath of God. He exercises a restraining power over the wicked world, because his people are amongst them. Why is society kept in its present security ? Why is the hand of those who are thirsting after blood, prevented from seizing the dagger, and plunging it into your bosom ? Why is your property not taken from you by those who are stronger than you ? Why do you retain your fair name, none daring to take it away ? Why do you walk in ease and safety, among those who are possessed by the spirit of demons ? The Bible gives the answer ; the hand of God is over us, preserving the world for the sake of those whose heads are to be lifted up, at the sound of the archangel's trumpet :—for this cause is he keeping the world in its present condition, preventing the overflowing of the vileness and filth of the human heart. What shall be the

case when this cause shall cease to operate, when we shall be with the Lord, when we shall be all gathered, and the world unsalted? Conceive the state of moral putrefaction, when human beings, "every imagination of the thoughts of whose hearts are only evil continually," shall be hardening themselves by the free indulgence of every lust, unchecked by the restraining grace of God; when every man's hand shall be against his brother. How rapidly will such a community ripen for the awful consummation so fearfully connected with the coming of the Lord in 2 Thessalonians i. 7—10. For, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

You will observe, my brethren, that in the plan I have adopted, in order to develope the prophetic course of events to this great consummation, I have resorted to no mystical interpretation of difficult passages of Scripture. I have confined myself to searching out from the Word of God

those simple declarations which do not need the mystifying of their literal sense, in order to convey the ideas; and of these my object has been to call your attention to a few only, but such as distinctly mark, step by step, the progress of our inquiry; and such as are capable of being plainly linked one upon another, without distorting their meaning to make them combine. By so doing, I have endeavoured to avoid coming in contact with those doubts which are produced, in many minds, by minute or unusual interpretations of several texts; which, however critically correct, and really to the point, are often found to waste the impression of these awful realities, by ineffective notions of speculative controversy. For fear of the possibility of weakening in any mind the effect of these great truths, by an alarm at mystical interpretations, I have even refrained from using in my argument any of the rich store of treasures to be found in the book of the Revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. But now that, without drawing from this source, I have led you thus far, by means of some of the simplest and plainest statements of our Lord and his apostles; I cannot forbear to present to your minds the picture drawn in that blessed book of the fearful consummation we have been considering. “And

I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud sat one like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap : for the time is come for thee to reap : for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth ; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire : and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth ; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” (Rev. xiv. 14—20.) Whatever mystery there may be in this description, how terrible is the idea it suggests to the mind.

But there is one other passage in the Reve-

lation to which I would refer you, because it exhibits a condensed statement—a sort of short index of the principal heads of the yet prospective anticipations. It begins on the key-note of our present subject, runs all the way up the chord, giving a note here and there—an arpeggio of the tone—all in harmony with the course I have pursued in these Lectures. Turn to the 12th verse of the 16th chapter of the Revelation: “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.” Here is the key-note, The restoration of the Jews to their own land. The drying up of the Euphrates is acknowledged, by general agreement, to indicate the gradual decay of the Ottoman empire; and this is declared to take place, in order that the Jews may be restored to Jerusalem. “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” I do not intend to explain this passage, or to require you to receive my views of any one of the particulars symbolized;

but if we agree that the drying up of the Euphrates is a sign, of the realizing of which, in the waning power of the Crescent, there can hardly be controversy raised ; then also all will agree, in general terms, that this mystical language describes spirits going out to prepare the people of the world to oppose and resist God at his “great day.” Whatever may be imagined of the particular distinctions of character between the spirits, it will not be denied that such a preparation is going forward at this moment in a thousand ways all over the world. And what is the next note that is struck, “Behold, I come as a thief!” Jesus comes as a thief, which is the comparison which he had before used, to express the mode of his approach ; and then is put forth the merciful warning, “Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” What follows ? “He gathered them together in a place, called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple in heaven, from the throne, saying, It is DONE.”

If, through the help of the Holy Spirit, I have been permitted to carry your minds through these links in the chain of God’s holy word ; if your minds have been arrested by the general

power of the whole truth, then what words shall I use in closing this discourse, that may be powerful enough to impress you sufficiently with the remembrance of the truths which have been declared. The text will supply them, Watch ! “ watch ye, therefore, and pray always ; (in the Greek, “ all the seasons ;”) that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things. What an escape will it be, when those around you shall be displaying their coward hearts, and manifesting their entire worldliness—their want of dependence on God—their unbelief in their own empty professions ; and when *their* hearts are failing them for fear. Oh ! what an escape then, to lift up your heads, and raise a song of joy, and say, “ My redemption draws nigh !” When the Lord Jesus Christ shall come, those that stand before him will be those who escape all these things that shall come to pass ; they shall pass through them, but they shall come forth safely from them ; many shall *not* escape—they shall be overwhelmed—they shall be left. They that escape will be those who are watching and praying at all seasons. Now this brings us to the important point. Do you watch ? Do you pray ? Upon your answer to these questions hinge your reasonable expectation of escape ; whether, when that great sign is seen

in heaven, you shall stand before the Son of man; accounted worthy for Christ's sake, and be gathered into his presence, clothed in His own garment of glory, and decked in the glorified body He has prepared for you; or whether those signs shall come upon you as a perplexing snare, and you shall be tormented by failing of heart; and when the crisis is past, whether you will go on hardening your heart, and ripening for the dreadful things that will take place; (for then men will willingly do things that they would shudder at now;) this awful alternative all hinges upon this: Do you watch? and do you pray? Do you search your conscience by excuses for want of watchfulness? They may do very well for a present purpose, but there is no allowance for excusings in this text. You have not watched, whatever your excuse may be. Are you too busy to pray? Too cold? too tempted? too anything? Well; you may deceive yourself with an unscriptural hope of escape, but I find nothing to give you hope here. Those who are in Christ—who have intercourse with God—who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, go on in persevering active faith now, will stand before the Son of man in the great day, as heirs of the inheritance of the saints in light. If you are not one of those—

say it with trembling anxiety and deep grief—you will perish. One shall be taken, and another left:—you will be one of those that are left. “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”



THE
GLORIOUS ADVENT
OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST.

LECTURE XI.

THE GLORIOUS ADVENT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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REV. xix. 12.

And on his head were many crowns.

THE whole passage, which is confessedly a description of the glorious Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, is this : “ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse ; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True ; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, *and on his head were many crowns* ; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite

the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**"

My brethren, to be saved, in the full and perfected sense of that expression, is to be made like unto our Saviour Christ, both in body and spirit. The beginning of salvation in man is to be willing to be like Christ. This is an essentially different thing from a willingness to escape punishment. Every man is naturally and instinctively willing to escape punishment ; and every man who has heard, and understood, and believed any thing about hell, is unfeignedly willing to escape its torments. This willingness by itself is no part of salvation. It is the mere instinct of terrified nature, increased sometimes to despairing agony, on a sinner's death-bed, while his heart all the while may be in a state of undiminished enmity against God. A willingness to be saved, on the contrary, includes a desire not only to escape punishment, but also to please God ; not only to avoid the pains of hell, but also to acquire a relish for the enjoyments of heaven ; not only to be shielded from the wrath of God, but also to be conformed to the holiness of God.

This conformity can be had only in the enjoy-

ment of communion with God, enlightened communion. Such communion implies not only access to our heavenly Father with filial confidence ; but also acquaintance with his character, and mind, and plans, as they are revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ ; and thus it is life eternal commenced in man, *to know God*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

In the advancement of this knowledge we have been engaged in these successive lectures. Expounding the prophetic Scriptures, we have been contemplating for our own benefit, and inviting the sanctifying contemplations of others to those great revealed designs which are so characteristic of the great Designer.

Prophecy, announcing from the first what shall be performed at last, bears witness to one remarkable feature in the Divine Mind ; in what we may call, for distinction's sake, the intellectual branch of the character of our God.

In examining, therefore, the original promise, or condensed prophecy, of God, as made in the Garden of Eden ; as unfolded to Abraham in its wide universality, comprehending all the families of the earth ; as reiterated to David with special reference to the designed supremacy of the Jewish nation among the nations ; as enlarged upon by Isaiah, both in its universal comprehensiveness,

and in its Jewish royalty; as suspended during the Jewish dispersion and Gentile calling, but still sure, infallibly sure, at the Jewish restoration; as including a special company, or “election of grace,” predestinated to share the glory of Jesus Christ as one body in Him, to sit with Him on His throne, and to exercise dominion over the renewed earth, which at His second coming shall be purified from all evil, diabolical and human, and restored to a state more glorious than that of Paradise, so to remain for ever and ever without death, or sorrow, or sin; in tracing the Scriptural streams of this pure and precious fountain of revealed truth, we have been cultivating the highest and best of all blessings, the sanctification of our souls—we have been holding communion with God unto the production in ourselves of increased conformity to his character.

And now we are invited to contemplate the end; the wonderful winding up of the great scheme, so far as God has been pleased to make his designs known to us. Our subject is **THE GLORIOUS ADVENT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

I shall consider it—

I. IN ITSELF AS A FACT, A REVEALED FACT; and,

II. IN ITS CONNECTION WITH THE VARIOUS CONVERGING LINES OF DIVINE REVELATION.

The testimony of the Lord Jesus is the spirit of them all, and the glorious advent of the Lord Jesus is the termination of them. In this every variation of the prophetic music issues most harmoniously. Whatever may be the prelude of the sacred strain: whether it open with the moaning travailings of a fallen creation waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God; or with the oppressions of the nations groaning under the bondage of unrighteous rulers; or with the dispersion and pre-eminent degradation of the Jewish captive, without her king and without her priest; or with the patience and faith of the Christian Church waiting till her elect number shall be completed—and with whatever prolongation of melancholy interest, the tones of the harp of prophecy may rest upon and reiterate such topics; still the grand theme is in reserve, and the chorus never thrills and electrifies with its perfect power; never rises and swells and deepens into the diapason of its sublime Hosannah, till HE, the King of Glory comes; King of Saints, King of Jews, King of kings! for “on his head are many crowns.”

I. CONSIDERING THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AS A FACT, I refer, in the first place, to the simple and sublime announce-

ment of it in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

(1.) Jesus shewed himself alive to his disciples after his crucifixion, and gave them many infallible proofs that it was he himself, the same whom they had known personally and intimately for three years before. They could not be mistaken as to his identity. This was continued from time to time for forty days ; and then, on one occasion, when he had spoken to them, and “ while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

Nothing can be more explicit : as it has been remarked, here is a *same*, and a *so*, and a *manner*, and a *like* manner : and “ the word spoken by angels is stedfast.” There was a time when the whole history of Jesus Christ was matter of prophecy, from the first step to the last. It was so for 4000 years. In due time the first step was taken. A virgin conceived and bare a son. This point became history. And what a flood of light did this fulfilment of so much of the prophecy throw upon

the right interpretation of the remainder ! While all was prophecy, if any one clause, taken literally, seemed more impracticable than the rest, and therefore more imperatively to demand a metaphorical interpretation than any other, it was this. I ask, then, has not that fulfilment of it, which is the very basis of Christianity, affixed the seal of God himself to the legitimacy of literal interpretation ? The second step was taken ; the tender plant grew up, despised and rejected of men. This point became history. Another step was taken. The despised and rejected one was nevertheless a wonderful and glorious one : under his hand the blind received their sight, the deaf heard, the lame man leaped as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb did sing, the dead were raised, and the poor had the Gospel preached to them : all these points became history. Another step was taken. This wonderful one was betrayed into the hands of enemies, buffeted, spit upon, mocked, and crucified. This became history. Another step was taken. This crucified one rose in triumph from the grave, leading captivity captive, and ascended into heaven. This also became history. And now but one step more remains, and whether it be at hand, or whether some years must still intervene before it also becomes history, the thing itself is as certain as any of the steps which have

already been taken : for it is not coming to pass that gives certainty to events, but it is the purpose of God which makes it certain that events shall come to pass. The last step in the prophecy is *this same Jesus*—this same who was taken up personally in a visible human body, with an audible human voice—this same whom the disciples had known personally ; who had been personally born at Bethlehem, and brought up at Nazareth ; who had personally preached and wrought miracles ; who had personally suffered, and died, and risen again—this same Jesus, in his own proper person, *shall so come* with a visible human body, and an audible human voice, *in like manner as they saw him go*.

(2.) For an illustration of this fact, I refer, in the next place, to THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS UPON MOUNT TABOR.

This is recorded by three of the Evangelist and always in the same connexion ; and to catch the true practical object of it, the connexion must be attended to. The fact itself is written at the beginning of St. Matthew, xvii. ; and to perceive the connexion, we must consider what our Lord had said to his disciples a few days before. From the time when they knew certainly who he was, and would thereupon be expecting certainly the immediate glory of the promised kingdom, he began to tell them what he must suffer. “

that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day," (xvi. 21.) Peter, unwilling to admit his Master's suffering, lest it should involve also his own, repudiated the idea with a rude liberty of rebuke. "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee," (xvi. 22.) Jesus discerned the devil in the worldliness of his disciple, and turning upon him, said, "Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," (ver. 23.) To aim at the kingdom first, without suffering, and without regard to righteousness, is the way of men—all who foster such sentiments, savour of the things of men. The way of God is to endure the legally incurred penalty first ; and having thus righteously triumphed, then to enter into glory. Jesus must suffer first ; and although none of his disciples can follow him in the atoning meritoriousness of his sufferings, they must all, in their appointed measure, follow him in the sanctifying characteristic of his sufferings, each filling up his part of that which remains of the sufferings of Christ. So he added on this occasion : "If

any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it," (ver. 24, 25.) The primary application of this is to those who had an alternative between Christian fidelity, and literal martyrdom; but in the spirit of it, it applies to every man who is tempted to seek ease and respectability among men, at the sacrifice of true devotedness to the cause of God.

This morally crucifying exhortation of the Lord Jesus, is enforced by two arguments—one addressed to the natural consciences of men, and the other to their faith in revelation. The first is in verse 26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This needs no illustration, or further enforcement, the terms of it being perfectly understood. The second is in verse 27: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." This is not so plain; for what does the coming of the Son of man in glory mean? As if to meet this difficulty, and to give this argument its full force, our Lord adds: "Verily I say unto you, There be some

standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," (ver. 28.) A few days after he took some of them, "and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead." (xvii. 2—9.)

That we are right, in using this as an illustrative specimen of the second coming of our Lord, is put beyond dispute by the language of St. Peter, in his second Epistle: "Moreover, I will endea-

vour, that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." (i. 15—18.)

The transfiguration was a prophecy by a fact.

(3.) In further elucidation of OUR LORD'S SECOND COMING CONSIDERED AS A FACT, I remark, that it is no where in Scripture proved in the way of argument. It is habitually taken for granted. It mingles as an element in the sacred writings, not as a statement to be proved, but as a fact marking a period to be ready for. In this respect the Bible treats it as it does the existence of God. The fool says in his heart, There is no God. The Bible calls him a fool for so saying, and proceeds taking the truth for granted, without ever once proving the proposition. The scoffer says in his heart, Where is the promise of the Lord's coming? The Bible calls him a scoffer for so saying, and proceeds taking

the fact for granted, without ever once proving the proposition. So the Apostles use it. St. Paul says,

“ So that ye come behind in no gift; *waiting for the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. i. 7.)

“ Therefore judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God.” (1. Cor. iv. 5.)

“ But every man in his own order : Christ the first fruits : afterwards, they that are Christ’s *at his coming*.” (1. Cor. xv. 23.)

“ For our conversation is in heaven ; *from whence* also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Phil. iii. 20.)

“ And to *wait for His Son from heaven*, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” (1. Thess. i. 10.)

“ For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ *at his coming* ?” (1 Thess. ii. 19.)

“ To the end, he may ’stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, *at*

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” (1 Thess. iii. 13.)

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless, unto *the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. v. 23.)

“And to you who are troubled, rest with us; *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven* with his mighty angels.” (2 Thess. i. 7.)

And St. James says, “Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto *the coming of the Lord*. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye, also, patient; stablish your hearts: for the *coming of the Lord* draweth nigh.” (James v. 7, 8.)

And St. Peter says: “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, *at the appearing of Jesus Christ*.” (1 Pet. i. 7.)

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you *at the revelation of Jesus Christ*.” (1 Pet. i. 13.)

Hear, also, what St. John saith: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, *when*

he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2)

II. I proceed now to consider THE CONNEXION OF THIS FACT WITH THE VARIOUS CONVERGING LINES OF DIVINE REVELATION.

The great leading branches of prophetic truth, which may be said to include all minor ramifications, are four in number, and the glorious advent of the Lord Jesus is the topmost bough of them all. The four will be sufficiently marked by his four titles with reference to them, all to be manifested at his coming, and all concentrating towards that sublime event.

His titles are :

(1.) *King of Saints*—to be manifested in the resurrection and transformation of his Church at his coming.

(2.) *King of Kings*—to be manifested in the establishment of his kingdom of righteousness, on the ruins of the gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and clay, of the great monarchies of mankind, at his coming.

(3.) *King of Jews*—to be manifested in the exaltation of that people restored to their land, to precedence and royalty of influence and dominion over all people. And,

(4.) *King of the whole earth*, or second Adam—

to be manifested in the renewal of this, our planet, and the restitution of all things therein, from the disasters of the curse, so that again it shall be said, "*Behold it is very good!*"

Into one or other of these broad Scriptural currents, every stream of prophecy naturally and gracefully flows. The combined river makes glad the city of God, while we rejoice in the rushing of many waters hastening to the glorious advent of our royal Redeemer, crowned with many crowns.

(1.) *King of Saints.* To open this in connexion with his glorious advent, I refer first to Heb. xi. 39, 40: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The persons here specifically spoken of, are the Old Testament believers; both those previously named by the Apostle, and those at whose history he had more generally hinted. Concerning these, he makes two assertions:

First, they obtained a good report, or were well witnessed of, through faith. And secondly, they did not receive the promise. The first has reference to their character—the practical results before men arising from their faith towards God—and does not belong to our present subject. The second demands discrimination between the pro-

mise considered in words, and *the thing promised* itself. The Apostle uses the expression, “the promises,” in both of these senses, as is evident from a comparison of the 13th with the 17th verse of this chapter. In verse 13, he says, concerning Abraham and others, “These all died in faith, *not having received the promises* :” and in the seventeenth verse he says concerning Abraham, “He that *had received the promises*, offered up his only begotten son.” He had received the words which conveyed the promise—sure words, spoken by Him who cannot lie; and in this sense he had received the promises. But he had not received the thing itself expressed in those words. The thing itself, though sure, was still future: neither yet have they received it, for it is still future.

The thing promised is made plain by the language of St. Paul, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. “When Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee : of the hope and *resurrection of the dead* I am called in question.” (xxiii. 6.) “But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets; and have hope toward God, which they themselves

also allow, that there shall be *a resurrection of the dead*, both of the just and unjust," (xxiv. 14, 15.) "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of *the promise* made of God unto our fathers : unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, *hope to come*. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should *raise the dead*?" (xxvi. 6—8.)

The Resurrection is manifestly the grand promise, and we learn in this passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 40) the reason why the believers of former days have not yet received the promise. It is God's sovereign arrangement that the perfection of his saints in resurrection should not be *seriatim*, but *simultaneous*. Their conversion, sanctification, death, and disembodied felicity, all these are given *seriatim* to generation after generation ; but unlike all these, Resurrection is withheld from generation after generation, until all shall be ready to receive it in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The saints of old could not be made perfect without us, but with us in one body they shall be made perfect, at the coming and crowning of their King and our King, their Head and our Head. Christ is risen the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's, all at

once, at his coming. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and then *the dead in Christ* shall rise, and *the living in Christ* shall be transformed : for we shall not all sleep in death, but we shall all be changed : *the dead* shall be raised incorruptible, and *we* (the generation of believers then living) shall be changed : our vile bodies fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, and standing as the upheld and united fragments of a shattered mirror, varying in shape and dimensions, but all giving back the same image, reflecting the perfected similitude of the King whose countenance, as the sun, shines upon all, and is admired in all. Then shall be sung, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the coronation anthem of the King of Saints, " O Death, where is thy sting, O Grave where is thy victory ? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord ! "

(2.) *King of kings*.—Prophecy contains an outline of the history of all the great kingdoms of the earth, from Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, down to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a history of authority unrighteously abused, and of dynasties successively overturned. In a prophecy addressed to one wicked king, the

Chapter II.—The History of the Kingdom of Great Britain, gives a full and complete account of the History of them all; and the establishment of the Kingdom of Great Britain is a scriptural and historical fact, and the government thereof is a scriptural and historical fact. "Thus saith the Lord God, I will take the crown off the crown; and I will give it to him that is low, and I will give it to him that is high. I will make him, over whom I will set him, and I will give it to him, until I will give it to him." "Thus saith the Lord God, I will give it to him, until I will give it to him."

Chapter III.—The Kingdom of Great Britain contains a complete and full account of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

Chapter IV.—The Kingdom of Great Britain contains a complete and full account of the Kingdom of Great Britain. God is over all, and he is the God of the universe. "God standeth in the congregation of the righteous: he will judge among the nations."

Chapter V.—The Kingdom of Great Britain contains a complete and full account of the Kingdom of Great Britain. "How long will ye rage against me, and how long will ye rage against me?" "How long will ye rage against me, and how long will ye rage against me?"

Chapter VI.—The Kingdom of Great Britain contains a complete and full account of the Kingdom of Great Britain. "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked." "How strikingly parallel to all this

is the language of Jehoshaphat to the judges of Israel. "Take heed what ye do : for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you ; take heed and do it ; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts." (2 Chron. xix. 6, 7.)

Verse 5.—The Rulers of this word are pronounced incorrigible : "*They know not, neither will they understand ; they walk on in darkness : all the foundations of the earth are out of course.*" They walk on in darkness, proudly and selfishly seeking their own ends, ambition, avarice, ease, sensuality ; instead of humbly remembering that they have a Master in heaven, and righteously serving God, who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all. In vain they are warned by the overthrow of their predecessors in office ; they will not understand.

Verse 6.—The dignity of their office admitted, nay magnified ; rendering the contrast with their character and ruin the more striking. "*I have said, Ye are gods : and all of you are children of the Most High.*" The powers that be are the ministers of God, the visible executors of his providential government. He called them "gods" to whom the word of God came.

Verse 7.—But unworthy of such dignity; abusing their lofty and responsible trusts, their doom is solemnly announced, “*But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes :*” like one of the angels who kept not their first estate among the principalities and powers in heavenly places, but whom “pride, and worse, ambition, has thrown down.” Even so shall the ungodly sovereigns of the nations fall. Sin shall break every sceptre; until He shall come whose right is the sinless sovereignty of the whole world.

Verse 8.—He is invoked to come. “*Arise, O God, judge the earth : for thou shalt inherit all nations.*” This last expression, “*inherit all nations,*” identifies the king. He is the seed of Abraham, to whom the promise was made, that he should be *the heir* of the world. (Rom. iv. 13.) He is the Son whom God hath appointed *heir* of all things. (Heb. i. 2.) He is the anointed, against whom the kings of the earth set themselves, and to whom the King of heaven, Jehovah the living God, says, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine *inheritance*, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” (Psalm ii.)

This language is addressed to our Lord *as man*.

As man, he is worthy to be king over all : worthy as regards God, by whom kings reign, because he gave all the honour of all he did, exclusively and habitually to God. A king, or a man, who seeks glory to himself, God will not suffer to continue, though he bear with him for a time. When Adam sought glory to himself, he fell. Every king, and every man, since, has sought glory to himself, the man Jesus only excepted. He sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him. His whole heart was set on glorifying God. He lived in perfect, uninterrupted obedience to the first and great commandment of the Divine law—love to God. Thus he is worthy as regards God.

And as regards man, he is worthy, because he loved every man as himself : because he “sought not his own things, but the things (the good) of others.” There was no unrighteousness in him, no selfishness, no pride, no personal ambition, no ease or indulgence of the flesh, regardless of the state and feelings of others : on the contrary, his truth, justice, compassion, loving kindness and sympathy, all were perfect. He is worthy. The sovereignty of man, as God’s vicegerent upon earth, was lost by sin ; and could be regained only by righteousness. Neither birth, nor talents, nor circumstances favouring human combinations of power, nor all these together, could instate a sinful man in per-

manent dominion. But Jesus is worthy to be king for ever.

It was the will of God that fallen man should be redeemed. It belonged to man's necessity, as a transgressor of the law, that his Redeemer should be man, and die under the curse incurred. Jesus said to God, Lo! I come to do thy will: and to man, Lo! I come to endure thy penalty. He did so. It was hard in man's nature to do so. He trembled under the mighty load with which it pleased the Father to bruise him. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. He cried with strong crying and tears. He sweat blood. He cried again. But he persevered.

'Tis done. The lawful captive may now be *lawfully* delivered. Satan is overcome, not by mere sovereign power, but by legal righteousness. For this Jesus is worthy.* God has exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that in due time, at the manifestation of his glory, every creature may be in subjection to him, every knee bowing at the hitherto despised and neglected name of Jesus. Men give praise to him. The spirits of the just, absent from the body, and surrounding him in glory, sing unto him "a new song, saying, Thou art worthy,...for thou wast slain

* Compare Phil. ii. 9, and observe the consequence from what precedes, *wherefore, &c.*

and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, *and we shall reign on the earth.*" (Rev. v. 9, 10.) On the earth! for he is like a certain nobleman, who went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, *and to return.* Behold, he cometh King of kings, and Lord of lords, and on his head are many crowns.

Particulars on this subject are given, by the Prophet Daniel, chapters ii. and vii., in a series of historical predictions, commencing distinctly and undeniably with Nebuchadnezzar, "*Thou art this head of gold,*" and descending in regular chronological order, through Persia, Greece, Rome, and the various states, temporal and ecclesiastical, which arose upon the destruction of the Roman Empire. Concerning this, additional particulars are filled in by St. John. For however difficult it may be to determine with precision what is signified by each of the symbols in the Apocalypse, it is admitted, with a degree of unanimity, which is truly surprising in such a case, that Rome is the leading subject: Rome, geographically designated as situate on seven hills: Rome, characteristically described under her various forms of pagan government, and professedly Christian, but really adulterous (i. e. idolatrous), ecclesiastical

tyranny and persecution: Rome finally, with all who receive her mark in their foreheads, or in their hands, exposed to the crushing retribution of the Righteous One, the King of kings.

“ I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters : with whom the kings of the earth have been practising idolatry, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine, intoxicated with the strong delusion of her idolatries . . . The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” (Rev. xvii.) In the vision, the woman sitting upon the waters is clearly distinguished from the waters upon which she sits—so therefore ought she to be in the interpretation. The waters are distinctly interpreted to mean multitudes of people in diverse nations; the woman therefore, by parity of interpretation, must be understood to mean that power which has lorded it over the nations, seducing them into the gross and open practice of idolatry. This is the papal **HIERARCHY**, as *distinguished from* **THE PEOPLE** * and the kings of the earth, upon whose religion and liberties she has sat as a great vampire. “ The woman which thou sawest is that great city,

* The reader's attention is requested to this distinction, between the *woman* and the *waters*.

which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” But her judgment shall come; for the kings of the earth shall in due time revolt against her tyranny, and avenge themselves: “these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” Then follows (in chap. xviii.) a long and terrific description of her desolation: and then (xix.), “Allelujah; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments,” &c. Then the “King of saints,” is presented in the prophecy; “for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife (the risen saints in one body, Eph. v. 25—33) hath made herself ready,” &c. And then: “I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, AND ON HIS HEAD WERE MANY CROWNS; and he had a name written, which no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations:

and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

(3.) *King of Jews.*—This subject has been largely brought forward in the course of these Lectures, and not more so than it well deserves. The history of the world we live in is a subject every way worthy of the study and serious attention of every reflecting man ; and no man can enter upon this study with any thing approaching to comprehensive intelligence, without having the Jewish nation pressed upon his notice. Some of the students of Holy Scripture have been long speaking and writing about the Jews, and have been by too many decried as enthusiastically silly for so occupying, or, as it has been rashly alleged, so wasting their time. But now the great Overruler of the affairs of men, whose hand none can stay, and who causeth what men call untoward events to come to pass, Almighty God himself, is so ordering the course of events, that not students of prophecy only, but philosophers and philanthropists, and public journalists and statesmen, and Christian kings, and now at last the Mahometan Sultan, all are talking about the Jews.

Since the day when God called Abraham from his home and country, and commanded him and his household and his descendants to be circumcised, even unto this day, the Jewish people have formed an important feature in the history of the world. For above two thousand years they alone, *as a nation*, possessed the knowledge of the true God. The advantages of Revelation were their peculiar and distinguishing privilege. True worship, as distinguished from idolatry, was confined to their land. They had religious pre-eminence among the nations.

For eighteen hundred years they have been degraded and dispersed throughout the world, their own land being occupied, and their holy city desecrated by Gentile strangers.

After some years, whether few or many I dare not say, they shall have restoration to their land, elevation, royalty, pre-eminence in dominion among the nations: and our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we have already contemplated returning to the earth as King of saints, and King of kings, shall manifest himself gloriously at Jerusalem as “the King of the Jews.”

For all this we appeal to the sure word of prophecy. There was a time when all this was only prophecy, from the first step to the last; but

step after step has become history, and we have already seen the light which the fulfilment of some clauses in the prophecy throws upon the interpretation of the remaining clauses. The predicted dispersion has been fulfilled to the letter; the predicted restoration has never yet been fulfilled. By 2 Chron. xvii. 12—19, we are enabled to form some notion of the *numbers* of the Jews in the reign of Jehoshaphat. The men of war, the mighty men of valour, who formed the standing army of the king, amounted to above a million; and this was of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin only. To how many millions then must not the men of war, but the whole population, men, women, and children, of the twelve tribes, have amounted? Compare with this the narrative in the commencement of the Book of Ezra, where we learn (ch. ii.) that the whole congregation together of the children of Israel, who went up out of the captivity, amounted only to forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty; besides the servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty. Even on the ground of numbers, therefore, if there existed no other objection, it would be most consistent and inconclusive to recognise, in a fraction of the people returning to Judah, a li-

fulfilment of the numerous and comprehensive predictions of national restoration.

Then, as regards their King, we have seen how the fact of the Incarnation compels us to interpret the first clause of the prophecy concerning him : and with that fact and that interpretation before us, we now read the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Jesus, as they are condensed into a most comprehensive epitome by the angel Gabriel, in the New. He said unto Mary, “Fear not, for thou hast found favour with God ; and behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS: He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.” So far there is no disposition in any Christian mind, to interfere with the literal understanding of the words. Why then should such a disposition manifest itself, when the angel adds, “And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.” David reigned over the twelve tribes of Israel in Jerusalem ; “and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” In this clear light we revert to the Old Testament, and selecting a specimen of that prophetic amplification with which the Holy Spirit made the servants of Jehovah eloquent, we recite Micah, iv. 6—8: “In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble

her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off" (who can this be? not surely the Christian Church, which is *made nigh* by the blood of Christ, Eph. ii. 13: who then can this be that was cast *far off*, but the Jewish people?) "a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Then shall it be seen, that not without the secret overruling of the Lord of hosts did Pontius Pilate write the significant title upon the cross, and refuse to alter it, saying oracularly, "What I have written I have written; and the writing of eternal truth was *Jesus of Nazareth, THE KING OF THE JEWS!*"

(4.) *King of the whole earth*; or second Adam. "On his head were many crowns!

St. Paul wrote to the Church of Christ: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. xvi. 20.) This language refers the Christian mind irresistibly to the first great promise uttered in the garden of Eden, that the serpent's head should be bruised. "The Lord God said unto the serpent, . . . I will put enmity between

thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : *it shall bruise thy head*, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” And it is written in the Apocalypse (xii. 9.) that “The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.” Concerning this fallen spirit, we read in diverse parts of Holy Scripture. He is called the Tempter, the Accuser of the brethren, the Devil, and Beelzebub the chief of devils. He is called, also, the Prince of the power of the air, the prince of this world, nay, the god of this world. The dominion of this world was originally granted to man; but the devil, by successfully usurping authority over man, has established his dominion over man’s world. Whether the angels who kept not their first estate, have damaged, or attempted to damage, any other world than this of our’s is not revealed. Our attention for all practical, moral purposes, is confined to this world. And even here, our knowledge is bounded by facts, which, *as facts*, no human ingenuity can disprove, but which, in their connexion with principles, no human reasoning can explain. The fall of man is such a fact. *Why* the living and eternal God, infinite in goodness and infinite in power, permitted it; or *how* its permission is consistent with his infinite perfections, no human, perhaps no created, intellect can

discern. “It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?” But our ignorance on these points does not disprove the fact itself. Here it is around us, with its ten thousand doleful proofs on every side, uttering their perpetually reiterated mournings, and lamentations, and woes. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” A dire disaster has befallen our species. A tyrant conqueror has enslaved our race. Death reigns triumphant. No care, no watchfulness, no management, however philosophically conducted, can shield man’s physical nature from the iron grasp. This admits of no dispute. Take the case of the most experienced physiologist. He has studied the human constitution: he knows the food, the air, the exercise, the washings, the clothings most conducive to its perfection in health and strength. He has practised (and this is a large concession) the most praiseworthy and persevering attention to all these excellent rules; no convivial party has ever enticed him to deviate from his theory of temperance: no cold morning has ever deterred him from his salubrious ablutions; and this has gone on for three score years and ten,—and what then?—Why then, in the language of Bishop Taylor, “His head shakes, his spirits languish, his breath smells, his face wrinkles, his stature bends, his eyes wax dim, his hands tremble, his hair falls,

his ears grow deaf.” And what then? Look there upon that corpse! It is lately dead: the appearance is still that of a man: the cheek has not lost its colour, nor the lip its parting smile: behold the lineaments of vein, and joint, and muscle; the exquisite structure of hand, and arm, and head; the seat of strength and intelligence! But now a few days have passed, and look again. Oh! the intolerable disgrace! corruption, decomposition, putrefaction! And is this all? Is this indeed the *last end* for which that frame was fearfully and wonderfully made?

Philosophy has no answer. She knows of no deliverer, and can at best but argue herself into satisfaction with her bondage. The chain is unavoidable, and she has no glad tidings for the captives. They sink into the grave; and beyond the grave philosophy is dumb, because she is blind.

But the Christian has glad tidings. He knows of a Deliverer who burst the bands of death, laid aside his grave clothes, and brought life and immortality to light. He knows that the captive corpse shall be rescued into the glorious liberty of the Resurrection; that this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on

* *Contemplations of the State of Man*, chap. iv.

incorruption. He knows the *second* ADAM, the restorer, not of man's body only, but of man's dominion also: the expeller of Satan 'not only from the graves of the human species, but also from the planet created for man's residence. He anticipates the "new earth" as well as the new body, and waits for the glorious advent of Jesus, the manifestation of the lawful King. "The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be our Lord and his name one." In that day, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Crown him with many crowns! Crown him the King of glory! Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty. The Lord mighty in battle, the conqueror of Satan, the magnifier of the law, the endurer of the penalty, the rifler of the tomb, the King of saints, the King of kings, the King of Jews, the King of the whole earth! Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory?

Thou art the King of glory, O Christ!

1.

FIRST ADVENT.

A Saviour ! strike aloud the string !
 Let every quickened sinner sing,
 Redeemed in Christ alone :
 His cleansing blood to me is given ;
 His spirit makes me meet for heaven ;
 The fear of death is gone.

2.

INTERMEDIATE STATE.

A Saviour ! richest odours raise
 From golden vials : prayer and praise
 To Him with sacred mirth :
 He hath redeemed us by his blood,
 And made us kings and priests to God,
 And we shall reign on earth.*

3.

When, when wilt thou avenge our blood
 On them that dwell on earth, O God,
 Most holy, just, and true ?
 Rest, a little season still,
 Till all your brethren I fulfil
 Who shall be slain like you †

4.

SECOND ADVENT.

A Saviour ! strike the harp again,
 Creation's new ! A louder strain
 The ransom'd now may sing.
 Death, the last foe, is taken away ;
 The grave is rifled of its prey,
 By Jesus Christ our King.

* Rev. v. 8—10.

† Rev. vi. 9—11.

CONCLUDING LECTURE ;

WITH

**A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE
WHOLE COURSE.**

LECTURE XII.

CONCLUDING LECTURE ; WITH A PRACTICAL
IMPROVEMENT OF THE WHOLE COURSE.

BY THE REV. JAMES HALDANE STEWART, A.M.

2 PETER iii. 11, 12

*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved,
what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all
holy conversation and godliness, looking for and
hasting unto the coming of the day of God.*

THE kind providence of God has brought us, my beloved friends, to the concluding Lecture of this deeply interesting course.

I cannot enter upon it without offering up my unfeigned praises and thanksgivings to Almighty God for his great goodness, more especially in these particulars. First, in the wisdom, scriptural knowledge, and union of doctrine, which he has granted to his servants ; so that with very limited opportunities for previous communication, there has been an entire accordance in their sentiments : each of the Lectures forming a distinct

link in one united chain; powerful in itself, whilst at the same time it gives increased strength and firmness to the whole.

Assuredly this is a cause for praise and thanksgiving. Since this general agreement affords a pleasing hope, that in answer to your prayers the Lord has graciously assisted his servants—has given to them “the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind.”

Another particular cause for praise I consider to be that remarkable stillness and deeply fixed and devout attention which has pervaded the congregation,—a stillness which has been particularly noticed by almost each successive preacher, at times so profound that it might almost have reminded us of the words of the prophet, “The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.”*

May this grace still be continued. May the Holy Spirit now vouchsafe his aid whilst I attempt—

I. TO REVIEW THE PROGRESSIVE STEPS IN WHICH THE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY HAS LED US.

II. TO SET FORTH THE COURSE IT NOW BECOMES US TO PURSUE.

* Habakkuk ii. 20.

May the Lord indeed be with us ; may He solemnize our minds, impress our consciences, and “bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”—that as it is the last, so it may, by the blessing of God, be among the most effectual of these Lectures.

I proceed then, I. TO REVIEW THE PROGRESSIVE STEPS IN WHICH THE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY HAS LED US.

Here it will be remembered, that before the prophetic roll was opened, that the word of God might be read with greater advantage, the rules to be observed in the interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures were stated. This appeared to be a necessary preliminary, since by the mode of interpretation adopted by some commentators, “the mind of the Spirit” was lost sight of ; and persons were called off from the plain grammatical meaning of the words, to some mystical sense, more accordant with the private opinions of the expositor.

These rules having been presented to you, the course was commenced by setting forth man’s original state, the dominion then given to him over the earth, the loss of that dominion by sin, and the promise of full restoration by the seed of the woman.

This mode of treating our subject was adopted in accordance with the principle, that the surest way to attain accurate knowledge is to trace a subject from its origin ; to commence at the fountain head, and then proceed with the stream as it widens and deepens in its course.

In opening this sublime thesis, a view was presented, as to which it is difficult to say whether the mind was more impressed with the power and goodness of God displayed in the creation of the world—with the exceeding sinfulness of man, in transgressing “his holy, just, and good commandment;” or with the depth of the divine wisdom and knowledge manifested in the glorious plan the Lord devised for man’s recovery ; a plan in which “mercy rejoices against judgment;” for in the very act of passing judgment upon Satan, God, as the righteous Governor of the world, gave a promise full of grace and mercy to fallen man —“the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head, and he shall bruise his heel.”

Here was the germ of blessedness ; that “sure word of prophecy that shineth as a light in a dark place.”

Having commenced with this cheering beam of hope, we were led on to the unfolding of this original prediction in the call of Abraham, and the blessings secured to him and to his seed, and

to all the families of the earth by the promise, covenant, and oath of God.

Here we saw a brighter manifestation of divine mercy. Previously to this period the promise given to our first parents, although sufficiently understood to afford to the elders a sure ground for their faith in God, was veiled in much obscurity. But when “the God of Glory appeared to Abraham, and called him to get out of his country into a land which he should shew him; an individual was chosen by the Lord as the progenitor of the race from whom the promised Deliverer was to come: and this Deliverer so clearly made known to the Father of the Faithful, that even at that distant period “he saw the day of Christ and was glad.”*

From this revelation made to Abraham, we proceeded to the days of David. The prophetic lamp would have brought into view the death-bed predictions of Jacob, the intermediate visions of Balaam, and the blessings pronounced by Moses, all of which continued to unfold the original promise; but these Scriptures were not dwelt upon, that the course taken by the inspired writers of the New Testament might be more exactly pursued. They, in tracing the genealogy of our blessed

* John viii. 56.

Lord, reckoned first from Abraham to David, then from David to the captivity in Babylon, and from thence to Christ himself. These divisions appear to have been made, from these periods forming special eras in the prophetic calendar. In Abraham we have the people selected from whom the Deliverer was to spring: but in David the actual tribe and family are made known. Still further the Holy Ghost, speaking by David in the Psalms, reveals the person of Messiah, his divine and human nature, His birth, His character, His sufferings, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His session at the right hand of God, and with these his universal kingdom. "All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him: His name shall endure for ever, His name shall be continued as long as the sun and men shall be blessed in Him, all nations shall call him blessed."

It would be a very pleasing task to follow the steps of those pious Israelites who at the appointed feasts went up to Jerusalem bearing with them the lamp of prophecy, when the appointed courses sung in the temple the inspired Psalms of David. They might have looked forward with a blessed hope to the speedy advent of their Mes-

* See Psalms 87, 45, 69, 22, 16, 68, 110, 72.

siah, and the consequent felicity of the human race. For then no obstacle appeared to the fulfilment of the promises made to David; but according to the light then bestowed, it was possible that “the salvation of Israel might soon come out of Zion,” and Jehovah’s King have “the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.”

Refreshing, however, as such a visit to the temple would be—time forbids us to pause at this point—we proceed therefore to the next link in the great chain of prophecy, namely, the further unfolding of the original promise by the Prophet Isaiah.

As it might have been expected, from the well known character of this fifth Evangelist, as he has been termed, the light was seen shining with increasing splendour. We heard, as from his inspired lips, those peculiarly animating predictions. First, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel:”^{*} and then, as if the seer was actually present at the event, this announcement was made, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,

* Isaiah vii. 14.

The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*"

In these portions there is a strong confirmation of the promise made to David, as in them the mystery of the same person, being David's Son and David's Lord, is cleared up; for the Child born, and the Son given, is declared to be "The mighty God, the everlasting Father." Here, also, it is predicted, that of "His government and peace there should be no end." Not only so, but that it should be a government connected with the Lord's oath to David. For the throne upon which He was to rule, and the kingdom he was to order, is declared to be David's throne and David's kingdom.

These predictions of Isaiah call for our attention, more particularly from their having been given for the express purpose of assuring king Ahab, one of David's posterity, that the promise made to him should be fulfilled. For it was given when the confederate kings of Syria, and of Israel, in-

* Isaiah ix. 6, 7.

vaded Judea with the avowed design of defeating this prophecy, by depriving king Ahab of the throne, and setting up one of another line as king of Judah: "Let us," they said, "go up against Judah and vex it, and let us make a trench therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal."* But thus saith the Lord: "Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand, for God is with us."†

Thus far the prophetic lamp had given a cheering light. Each new prediction had unfolded some additional blessing, or more fully established some previous promise. But the sin of the successors of David produced a suspension of the promises. The sure word of prophecy led us, therefore, into a very different track. The Lord when he gave that gracious promise to David, "My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him: his seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven," annexed this condition: "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and

* Isaiah vii. 6.

† Ibid. viii. 10.

their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.”* These threatenings were carried into effect, partially, soon after the death of Solomon, by taking from his son Rehoboam ten of the tribes, and placing them under a king of their own choosing; and afterwarwards more fully, by raising up a succession of Gentile monarchs, who, with some intermediate seasons of favour, have, from the days of Shalmanezar, by whom the ten tribes were carried away, to the present time, held Judah and Israel in subjection: they have burnt the temple, taken possession of the Holy Land, scattered the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and made them a bye-word and a proverb throughout the earth. So complete has this suspension of the promises to Israel been, that not only has the sceptre departed from Judah, but their spiritual privileges have, for a season, been lost. The Lord has fulfilled the word spoken by our blessed Saviour, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”†

This heavy doom had been before predicted by Moses in that remarkable song in which the history of the twelve tribes of Israel, from that day

* Psalm lxxxix. 28—34.

† Matt. xxi. 43.

to the present, is foretold. These are the words : “ They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities ; and I will provoke them to jealousy with those which are not a people : I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.”* It is to this chastisement for the transgressions of Israel, that we are to trace our present dispensation ; a dispensation called “ The times of the Gentiles,” for these two reasons ; first, because during that period the posterity of Abraham are to be subjected to the oppressive dominion of the four great Gentile kingdoms mentioned by the prophet Daniel ; secondly, because during a large portion of this period, namely, from the time that the second temple was destroyed, till the restoration of Judah to the Divine favour, the Lord has placed the administration of his Church in the hands of the Gentiles ; so that instead of the inquirer after truth going up to Jerusalem, as did the queen of Sheba in the days of Solomon, and the Ethiopian eunuch whilst the temple was yet standing, even a Jew who would obtain the knowledge of the true God, must apply to a Gentile, or at least to one of his own nation, converted to God through Gentile instrumentality.

And here, my beloved brethren, I cannot but

* Deut. xxxii. 21.

pause for a moment to lead you to admire the exceeding riches of the divine grace and mercy bestowed upon us Gentiles. What was the state of the heathen world when Judah was broken off that we might be grafted in? Had they profited by the manifestations which creation gave of “the invisible things of God,” namely “his eternal power and God-head?” By no means: the most learned among them, “professing themselves to be wise, became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.”* This profane idolatry was accompanied with such abominable sins as cannot even be named among Christians. And yet, under how blessed a dispensation have we been placed—a dispensation relieved from all the burdens of the Jewish ritual, from the obscurity of typical shadows, and prophetic visions, and in which the clear light of the glorious Gospel broke forth with meridian lustre, offering full, free, and eternal salvation to every one that believeth—proclaiming forgiveness of sins to the chief of sinners, a full supply of grace to every penitent, and “all things pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue”—omitting

* Romans i. 22, 23.

none, but making known this glorious truth, that “there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* And again, declaring that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”† It would seem as if God, in this season of the suspension of his promises to Judah, would leave nothing for us Gentiles to desire. But having so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life, “he would with him also freely give us all things.” Whilst the Lord has thus bestowed upon us Gentiles more abundant grace in the fulness and freedom of the Gospel, he has also favoured us in the length of our dispensation: for the time in which the administration of the Church of God has been placed in the hands of the Gentiles, has been an uninterrupted period of nearly 1800 years. During all that time, the word has been going forth, “Come, for all things are now ready;” the promise of the Saviour to be with his Church

* Romans x. 12, 13.

† Coloss. iii. 1.

has not been revoked, but “whosoever will, may come and take of the water of life freely.”

This blessed dispensation has, I say, been granted to us Gentiles for nearly 1800 years—a time almost equal in length to the whole of the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensation, including the 400 years of bondage in Egypt, and the 70 years captivity in Babylon. So that in length of time, as well as in superiority of privileges, we Gentiles have been most highly favoured.

But to proceed with our review of the progressive steps in which the sure word of prophecy has led us. The different links in this great chain having unfolded to us the suspension of the promise made to David, and the introduction of the times of the Gentiles, that we might clearly see that God’s covenant with Abraham, and his oath to David, were not annulled or made void at the birth of our Lord, but only suspended for a season; and that we might also be fully acquainted with the nature of the dispensation under which we have been placed, the inspired hymn of Zachariah, recorded in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke, was opened. This hymn, as we heard beautifully expressed, “was the revival of the cheering notes of Prophecy,” after the Prophetic harp had remained silent for nearly 400 years. It was strung afresh at the birth of the

forerunner of our Saviour, to make known that another dispensation, namely, that of the Gentiles, was soon to commence: but as if the Holy Ghost would convince us that the dispensation was only an intermediate one, and one which was to endure but for a season, that it was still through the Jews that the whole family of man was to be blessed: before Zachariah addresses a word to his son, filled with the Holy Ghost he broke forth in praise to Jehovah—"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our Fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." A service which could not be rendered until "the times of the Gentiles" were fulfilled; for till this period is accomplished "desolations were determined," as the prophet Daniel had foretold.* The tribes of Israel could not therefore serve the Lord

* Daniel ix. 26.

without fear, until this desolation ceased. Having thus confirmed the Old Testament promises, Zacharias, as we have heard, then made known the office of his son John the Baptist, as the forerunner of our Lord, visiting his people, as the day-spring from on high, "to give light to them that sit in darkness," namely the Gentile nations, and "to guide our feet," namely the remnant of Israel, according to the election of grace, "into the way of peace."

The nature of the Gentile dispensation having been thus clearly ascertained, we were then led on to those deeply interesting subjects, the certainty of the restoration of Judah and Israel at the end of "the times of the Gentiles;" the Scripture signs of those times drawing to a close, compared with present events; and the blessings promised to the righteous, and the judgments denounced upon the wicked, at that period: these discourses were followed by one upon "the glorious advent of our Lord Jesus Christ." These Lectures having been so lately delivered, must be so fresh upon your memories as to make it almost unnecessary further to refer to them. For the sake, however, of those who may not have been present, I will only briefly mention these things.

First, That the certainty of the restoration of the tribes of Israel and Judah was clearly proved by the

promises of God to that effect, and especially by the memorable prophecy delivered by our Lord on the Mount of Olives ;* and by his conversation with his disciples, previous to his ascension, as recorded in the 1st chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

Secondly, That the Scriptural signs of the times of the Gentiles drawing to a close, which were noticed, were these : the preaching of the Gospel among all nations, as a witness ; the present state of the Jews, with the altered feelings of Christians towards them ; and the very strong probability that the different periods of prophetic time, or “chronological dates,” as they are called, had nearly run out. Of this fact, the following striking proof was given with reference to the term “Of a time, times, and the dividing of time,” or the 1260 prophetic days mentioned in the Book of Daniel and in the Revelations, that the Mahometan dial might be said to be now pointing to the year 1256 of the Hegira, that being the date of some of the late firmans of the Turkish sultan.

Thirdly, It was shewn that it was *immediately* after the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles, that these predicted judgments would take place. “There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon,

* Matt. xxiv., Luke xxi.

and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory; and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."*

It is, my beloved friends, to this point that the sure word of prophecy has brought us. Tracing from the beginning the past, present, and future purpose of God respecting the Jews, we have found that the original promise of full restoration made to our first parents at their fall, was to be accomplished through the seed of Abraham; and that it was through the extension of the kingdom of "David's Son and David's Lord," that "all nations were to be blessed." That in consequence of the sins of Solomon and his successors, instead of the immediate spread of the kingdom of David, the sceptre departed from Judah, her temple was destroyed, her people dispersed through the nations, and the kingdom of God for a season given to the Gentiles. That the treading down of

* Luke xxi. 25—28.

Jerusalem by the Gentiles was to be for a limited time, at the expiration of which the tribes of Israel were to be restored, and God to take vengeance upon his enemies, and bless his faithful people. And lastly, that certain signs were to announce the approach of this crisis, and that very similar appearances to these signs are now visible. **HERE IS THE PLACE ON WHICH WE NOW STAND.**

To enable us, however, to take a complete view of our position, it will be needful to answer this highly important question. As it was the sins of the Jews which caused Jehovah to take away the kingdom from them, and to give it to us Gentiles, as “a nation required to bring forth the fruits thereof,” have we fulfilled this purpose? Placed as we have been in much more highly favoured circumstances than the Jews, have we manifested our gratitude to God by abounding in the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to his praise and glory? This, my friends, is a most important question. For as the promises made to David were subject to the condition, “that if his children broke his statutes, and kept not his commandments, God would visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes ;” it follows, by a just analogy, that should we dishonour God, and break his commandments, the

Lord's vineyard will be taken away from us also. Of this the Apostle Paul gives warning. He says, in the 11th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, "Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness; if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." You mark the expression, "otherwise THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF." Thou shalt partake of a similar punishment to that inflicted upon the Jews, who for their sins were cast out of the vineyard. Have the Gentiles then, during their dispensation, rendered to God his due? When the Lord comes to receive from them the fruits of his vineyard, will he find an abundant produce? or will he have to say, as he did of his Jewish vineyard, "I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes?"* Let the present state of Christendom answer this momentous question. What reply do the Eastern churches make? That they have "a name, that they live, but are dead?" What reply do the continental nations of Europe make? With a very small remnant of true believers, whom the Lord has left, they are, alas, in many parts avowed infidels; in others,

* Isaiah v. 4.

bowing down to the Virgin Mary, and given up to the idolatries of the church of Rome ; in others neologists ; and in others, they only bear the name of Protestants, having “ the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” And what says our own highly favoured country, this Protestant kingdom ? Do not the large masses of the inhabitants resident in the metropolis and our large towns, who very rarely enter a place of public worship ; the increase of Chartists, Socialists, and avowed infidels ; the open profanation of the Sabbath by numerous bodies of rail-road proprietors and others ; the pride, the boasting, the sensuality, the covetousness, and worldly mindedness, which, alas, meet the eye in almost every part of our land,—do not these open violations of the law of God, and rejection of his glorious Gospel, testify that if the Jewish vineyard brought forth wild grapes, the Gentile vine “ is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah ; their grapes, grapes of gall, and their clusters bitter.” For if we except the great sin of crucifying the Lord of glory, every candid mind will confess, however humbling the confession may be, that the Gentile church, considering its superior privileges, has more openly dishonoured God than ever Jerusalem did.

This is the position in which we Gentiles now

stand. For nearly 1800 years the Lord's vineyard, or the church of God, has been entrusted to us under a peculiarly favourable dispensation ; so far, however, from using it to his glory, we have, alas, equalled, if not exceeded, the Jews in their transgressions against Him.

And now there are signs appearing similar, to a certain extent, to those which the prophetic Scriptures declare will be seen when our dispensation shall be about to terminate. These appearances are visible at a very extraordinary crisis, namely, when the eyes of almost all classes are turned towards the Jews ; when the question whether there shall be peace or war throughout the world, seems to turn upon this issue, who shall possess the land given by God to Abraham ?—when also the Gentile world is in so critical a state, that multitudes are calling out, “ It is impossible that things can continue as they are ; there must be a change.” These are our present circumstances. May the Lord grant us that wisdom which will enable us to discern “ the signs of the times ;” that we may be of that blessed number of whom the Prophet Daniel predicts, “ none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” *

In deducing, then, a practical improvement from

* Dan. xii. 10.

the sight given to us by the sure word of prophecy, compared with events, we proceed to set forth the course it becomes us now to pursue. And here I cannot but again earnestly entreat your prayers for the special aid of the Holy Spirit that the Lord may enable me to speak that which shall be for your present peace and everlasting glory. For oh, how important it is, my beloved friends, to be rightly directed at this great crisis of the world!

The first step, I would say then, which it becomes every one to take who may have heard the report of these Lectures being about to be delivered, or into whose hands they may hereafter fall, is, **WITH EARNEST PRAYER DILIGENTLY TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, AND TO MARK THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES ;** that each may judge for himself whether that which has been spoken, compared with past and present events, accords with the revealed word of God.

For it is a fact confessed by all, that we are living in very remarkable times—times so full of uncertainty that the wisest statesman is utterly at a loss how to guide the helm, or safely to conduct his country through the threatening storm. In such times it is only the part of a sentient being to be preparing for whatever events may unexpectedly occur. We know that wise men act

differently in seasons of apprehended danger, and in times of entire safety. When an alarm of fire has been spread, and the flames—the appearance of which occasioned the alarm—seem to have been extinguished; if a stranger of only ordinary credit was to say to the master of the house, “I fear, Sir, although I am not absolutely certain of the fact, that the fire in your dwelling is kindling again, and will soon burst forth,” would not a person of common prudence inquire whether or not the fears of his informant were well grounded? Assuredly he would. He would say, “This stranger may perhaps be mistaken; still, as his friendly warning regards my own dwelling, I shall attend to what he says.”

If this would be the case, and if we should hold that person without excuse who should turn a deaf ear to such a statement, or only smile at the intelligence, how much more inexcusable must neglect or indifference be when the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the name of their divine Master, and after much study of his holy word, and much prayer for the aid of the Holy Spirit, make known what they conscientiously believe to be our situation at this moment!

For, my beloved brethren, let it be borne in mind, that, in delivering these lectures, we have not been influenced by any private motive, or by

a vain wish to press any opinions of our own upon the public; but from a conscientious desire to discharge a very important duty: as the Lord's watchmen, to give warning of coming danger, or rather as under-shepherds of the flock of Christ, to save the souls of those for whom the great Shepherd of the sheep shed his precious blood.

We would not dogmatically say that a perfectly exact interpretation has most assuredly been given of every text of Scripture referred to, for this would be to declare ourselves infallible: but this we do say, that it is our own full and assured belief, that the statements we have made, as to the purpose of God respecting the Jews and their connexion with the Gentiles, is according "to the mind of the Spirit," or in entire accordance with the sure word of prophecy.

And we call upon you to mark this as a reason for your giving the "greater heed to the things which you have heard;"—that it is the harmonious testimony of several of the Lord's servants, delivered in the second town in the empire in point of numbers and of commercial celebrity,—a testimony which may therefore be considered as a message from God to all its inhabitants, if not to the whole nation. I say, therefore, that this is the first step which it becomes every indi-

vidual to take, who has heard, or who might have heard, these Lectures—prayerfully and diligently to search the Scriptures, and, comparing them with the events now occurring, to ascertain whether the statements we have made are or are not according to truth.

Having made this inquiry, if our statements are admitted to be true, the next step will be to follow up this inquiry by another most important one; Am I prepared to meet the tribulation which will take place when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled? And this is an inquiry which it becomes every individual, from the highest to the lowest station, to make. For as when God sent his judgments upon Egypt, the first-born of Pharoah, equally with the first-born of the captive in the dungeon, was cut off,—as also when Jerusalem was destroyed, all classes were involved in the calamity,—so will it be in the Gentile tribulation. For thus is it written; “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty; and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with

the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.”* Every station of life, from the highest to the lowest, is equally affected. Hence in the striking description given of this day in the 6th chapter of the Revelations, this awful scene is depicted: “The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” I say, therefore, it becomes every one to put the question to his own heart: Am I ready to meet this great tribulation?

It is declared, that those who are ready have no cause for fear, but rather for joy and gladness; for thus it is written, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.”† “Am I then one of the Lord’s redeemed people?” And have I these scriptural proofs that I am so? Have I felt my need of this redemption? and under this conviction, have I in truth come to the

* Isaiah xxiv. 1, 2.

† Luke xxi. 28.

Lord Jesus Christ as a sinner, that I might obtain it? And having come, have I the character of his redeemed, whom St. Paul thus describes, “He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*

Let me beseech you, my beloved friends, to make this personal inquiry: not to allow the question to pass as an affair of little interest, but put it solemnly to yourself ere you retire to rest this night, **“AM I READY? AM I ONE OF THE LORD’S REDEEMED PEOPLE?”** Put it again when you rise in the morning: then say to yourself, **“Am I ready? Am I one of the Lord’s redeemed people?”** Let it follow you into the active duties of life, and still pursue you in your retirement. Again repeat the question, **“Am I ready? Am I one of the Lord’s redeemed people?”** allow it not to leave you till you have actually **“fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us”†** in the Gospel. For no one can say how soon the times of the Gentiles may be fulfilled: they differ from our Lord’s advent, **“The day or hour of which no man knoweth.”** These are fixed times noted down in the Scriptures of truth; and it is only our ignorance of the commencement of

* Titus ii. 14.

† Heb. vi. 18.

the time which prevents our knowing the very day when they will terminate ; they are like the 400 years of bondage in Egypt, and the 70 years of captivity in Babylon, which ended the very day on which the prophetic dates expired. And how rapidly do events follow which are connected with these times ! Even whilst this course of Lectures have been delivering, a firman has been issued by the Grand Sultan, granting full protection to the Jews throughout his dominions, thus greatly facilitating their return to their own land.*

Let me, then, beseech you not to trifle with the subject ; not to be satisfied with assenting to the truth of that which you have heard ; but to bring it home to your own heart, with this personal application : the time may be near at hand when “ one shall be taken, and the other left.” Where shall I then be ? Gracious God, prepare me for that great day. “ Remember me with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people : O visit me with thy salvation : that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.”

Having, as individuals, made your personal “ calling and election sure,” there is a national

* See Exodus xii. 40, 41, compared with Genesis xvi. 13, and Daniel ix. 2, and vi. 30.

step to be taken in this crisis, and that is, humiliation before God for our national sins, and especially for our past oppressions of the Lord's ancient people, united with a hearty endeavour to fulfil the commands he has given to us Gentiles regarding them. This is His charge who is looking forward with ardent zeal for the year of his redeemed, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him and his work before him." Here the Lord gives a command to a distant Gentile nation, which some very learned interpreters consider as particularly referring to the British Isles, to make known his speedy advent to his dispersed people.

Again, in that animating chapter, in which the prophet Isaiah thus addresses the remnant of Judah: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glori-

fied thee," he accompanies the declaration with this solemn warning : " For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish ; yea those nations shall be utterly wasted." As if the prophet would make known to us Gentiles wherein our safety consists, namely, in taking part with the Jews, and aiding them in their predicted return. The prophet Jeremiah goes further : these are his animating words, " Thus saith the Lord, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations ; publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel." In this passage the Lord directs prayers to be offered for His ancient people, by *the chief of the nations*. And who at this moment, allow me to ask, occupies this place ? May we not, without presumption, say : The British empire ? It is to us then that this charge is given : and as if to encourage our swift obedience to the command, these gracious predictions immediately follow : " Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together : a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them : I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not

stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd: and their souls shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.”*

This, then, forms another important step in our present course, namely, to shew kindness to the Jews, accompanied with earnest prayer for them, and with scriptural instruction.

And here I cannot but offer up praises and thanksgivings to Almighty God, for having inclined the hearts of our rulers; to regard the remnant of Judah with so much favour. It is only since our Gracious Queen came to the throne, that for the first time a British consul has been appointed to the Holy Land,—and appointed with this express commission, to be the protector of the Jews. I consider it among the most favourable signs for

* Jeremiah xxxi.

our country, knowing that the Lord will fulfil his word: "I will bless them that bless thee;" "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee." It may not be known to all who are present, that the kindness thus shewn by her Gracious Majesty, whom the Lord long preserve, to the Lord's ancient people, is an hereditary kindness; for her august father was patron to the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, at a time when their conversion was looked upon with very different eyes. I perfectly recollect his Royal Highness being present at the first opening of the Jews' Chapel in London, about 25 years since, when, in allusion to his Royal Highness' profession, the preacher took his text from the history of the good centurion, "He loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." May this text be still more applicable to his royal daughter: may the remnant of Judah be able to say, "The queen of England loves our nation, and, like 'a nursing mother,'* uses her extensive influence and regal authority to make known to us our true Messiah, and to carry us back in peace to our wished-for land."

But that I may not appear like the Pharisees of old, who were "laying burdens upon other men's

* Isaiah xix. 23.

shoulders, whilst they would not move them with one of their fingers," I would respectfully mention a most important step for the ministers of the Lord now to take. May I request my beloved brethren who may be present, to excuse the freedom of my address, and to consider that the counsel which I give to them, I give to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance ; and, with an earnest request for their prayers that the Lord would enable me to pursue the same course, I would then, with the affection of a father, and with the freedom of a brother, repeat to them the words the apostle Paul used to his beloved Timothy, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom, Preach the word"—preach **THE WORD**, the word which proclaims full, free, and eternal salvation to the chief of sinners, repenting of his sin, and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ—"the word" which the angel, mentioned in the 14th chapter of the Revelations, had it in charge to preach. Thus St. John describes him : "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud

voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.”*

This, my beloved brethren, I fully believe to be the Gospel we are to preach in the present day—the Gospel which calls upon men to give glory to God, by preparing for those judgments which are coming upon the earth.

I am quite aware that some few years since this was done with a zeal not according to knowledge, and with a mixture of error in doctrine, which caused the Gospel of the kingdom to fall into disrepute ; but we know, my beloved brethren, that it is not the abuse of a thing which is to prevent its use ; but that such abuse should only make us more watchful, more humble, more prayerful, more earnest in seeking to be taught of God, that we may not “darken counsel by words without knowledge.” For it is Satan’s constant device to prevent the church of God listening to any peculiarly important truth, to tempt some of the servants of the Lord to misrepresent that truth, or to mix it up with error, and thus to bring it into disrepute. But in the present crisis, when “the signs of the times” are so peculiar, the errors of other men are not to deter us from performing our duty.

* Revelations xiv. 6, 7.

We appear to be placed at the present moment very much like the angel who has' the everlasting Gospel to preach, He is represented as "flying in the midst of heaven," as if there was but a very short time to fulfil his commission. For who can say how soon these predicted judgments may come? We stand, if I may be allowed the comparison, by the side of "the children of this world," as the crew of a life-boat placed alongside a sinking ship, and as we love their souls, we shall be earnest in our cry. "Escape for your life—make no delay—come on board the life-boat—come at once, for there is but a little moment, and the world of the ungodly will go down to rise no more." O my beloved friends, when we think of the dreadful judgments which will then overtake the impenitent sinner, we cannot but earnestly pray (may the Lord hear our prayers!) that God would grant us strength, boldness, affection, simplicity, scriptural knowledge, heavenly wisdom, above all, that he will honour us, by making us instruments of saving many souls, plucking many "as brands from the burning," and "presenting them perfect in Christ Jesus as our crown of rejoicing at the coming of our Lord."

But I must hasten to mention another part of the course which is now to be pursued, namely, that which becomes sincere Christians. This is

stated in my text; "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God."

Yes, my beloved friends, this is your point, to seek after such a standard of holy practice as cannot well be defined. The Apostle seems to want words to express himself. "WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness !" For it is the brightness with which the lamp of your profession shall shine, that will not only prove that the Spirit of God is dwelling in your heart, but will lead others to say, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." Such a request would never be made to a half-hearted, worldly-minded professor. No; his dim oil would never be desired. It must be the light of love ; the light which burns with a pure, bright, steady, constant flame ; such a light as the Lord gave to his Apostles, when "they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." It well merits notice, that after our blessed Saviour had answered the inquiries of his disciples as "to what should be the signs of his coming, and the end of the world;" when he opened his very heart to them in the night in which he was betrayed, it was to make known to them his new command-

ment; "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another." Oh, then, my dear friends, see that this lamp of love burns brightly.

We cannot expect those who break the Sabbath; who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;" who "deny the Lord that bought them," and whose hearts are going after their covetousness, we cannot expect to find in them the mind of Christ. Where we look for it, is in those who every month assemble at his table, solemnly dedicate themselves, "their souls and bodies, to Him, as a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice." These are the persons whom we expect to have "their loins girt, and their lamps burning," to be looking for, and hasting to the coming of the day of God; to be so watchful, so prayerful, so sound in their faith, so heavenly minded in their spirit, so correct in their principles, so self-denying in their habits, so just in their ordinary business, that those who meet them in their daily walk, may readily say, "We will go with you, for we see that God is with you." Yes, my friends, it is from the communicants of our churches that we expect this standard, but not by their own strength or native exertion. No; it is from His grace, who first loved you, and then washed you from your sins in his own blood, and who, when he left his disciples, left

them with the promise, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter; even the Spirit of Truth, who shall abide with you for ever." (John xiv. 16.) It is by receiving a larger measure of His grace that this holy conversation, and godliness, is to be obtained; and it is with a view to your receiving this yourselves, and being instrumental to procure it for others, that the invitation which has been circulated among you for a general concert for prayer on the first day of the new year, for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, has been given. That concert will, we doubt not, be held by Christians in the north, and south, and east, and west. And when we are holding it, how delightful it will be to anticipate the day when another office will be assigned to us. When the day of our redemption having at length arrived, prayer will be turned into praise, and the whole company of the redeemed shall unite in singing "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."

Finally, allow me to conclude by a brief address to any of the remnant of Judah whom the providence of God may have brought within these walls. The Lectures regarding the past, present, and future purpose of God towards your nation, are now brought to a close. They owe their origin to that light which the God of Abraham has given me into your inspired

Scriptures. This light has produced a tender sympathy and deep concern for your welfare, for your Father's sake. For to them we owe, under God, all our peace in this life, and all our blessed hopes of everlasting glory in another. For from your nation sprang the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, yea, Christ himself, even Him who "is the light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of his people Israel." Receiving such blessings through your ancestors, "my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved." Yes, there have been few days for nearly the last three and thirty years of my life, that my prayer has not been that the Lord might fulfil his promises to Abraham and Isaac, turn ungodliness from Jacob, and grant "that the receiving of the Jews might be as life from the dead to the Gentiles." And now that "the signs of the times" afford a hope that "the time to favour Zion, yea, that the set time is come," I would earnestly beseech you attentively to reflect upon the things you have heard; and especially to search your own Scriptures with a candid mind. Not to allow any previously formed opinions to warp your judgment, but to entreat the Lord to open your understanding to understand the Scriptures. We have traced the purpose of God as to your nation from your own

inspired books; these same Scriptures reveal to you the character of your Messiah. They show you who and what He was to be: at the same time the Son of God and the Son of Man: a child born, and yet the mighty God: a despised sufferer, and yet a victorious conqueror: a root out of a dry ground, and yet a branch beautiful and glorious: who as a King should reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the earth: these same Scriptures reveal to you these blessed promises:—

“If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember: and I will remember the land.”*

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them

* Leviticus xxvi. 40—42.

to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou, and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”* Oh, then bethink yourselves. Repent of your past wickedness: entreat the Lord to pour out upon you the Spirit of grace and supplication, that the word spoken by your prophet Zechariah may be fulfilled, “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his

* Deut. xxx. 1—7.

only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

It may seem strange to you, that a Gentile should presume to instruct you in your religion. It is only doing that which your lawgiver Moses, and your prophets, said should come to pass. Receive therefore the counsel as that of a friend who loves you; yea, as the word of one of the servants of the Most High God, to whom the Lord has given a charge, “Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh: Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.” “Hear ye then, and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride.”*

* Jeremiah xiii. 15—17.



